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OLD ENGLISH FAIRY TALES

OLD
ENGLISH FAIRY TALES

COLLECTED BY

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"OLD COUNTRY LIFE" ETC.

ILLUSTRATED BY F. D. BEDFORD

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PREFACE

IT has been to me a matter of surprise that no collection has been made and adapted to the reading of children of the old delightful English folk tales and traditionary stories that exist, scattered up and down in all manner of places.

We have had for their delectation numerous editions of the French tales of Perault and the Countess D'Aulnoy, and the German stories of Grimm, but our own native springs have been neglected. There is a singular perversity in the English character—that it will seek abroad, and and value what is foreign, and neglect and disparage what is native. This, which has blighted our drama, our music, our architecture, affects even our nursery literature. Recently, indeed, Mr. Jacobs has issued his *English Fairy Tales* in two volumes,—a first and second series,—but he has taken mostly modern folk tales, and he has not gone to the ancient sources, whence may be drawn some of the best old English fairy tales. I now give English children an instalment of seventeen, and two that are Welsh, told in my own way, and in most cases expanded, as I have seen fit. The bare bones that I have attempted to reclothe with flesh are accessible to antiquaries and bibliographers. I give them references where to find these. But this book is not written for them, but for children, be it well understood; and it is written by one who as a a child was greedy after fairy tales, and is not ashamed to add, loves them dearly still. If I have woven two and even more tales into one, or introduced episodes from others, then I have used that licence which belongs to every old woman who tells stories to children. The incidents in fairy tales are like kaleidoscopic particles, ever entering into new combinations. If English children like native-grown tales, then let me assure them the spring is not exhausted; I have more wherewith to supply them.

S. BARING GOULD.

LEW TRENCHARD, N. DEVON.

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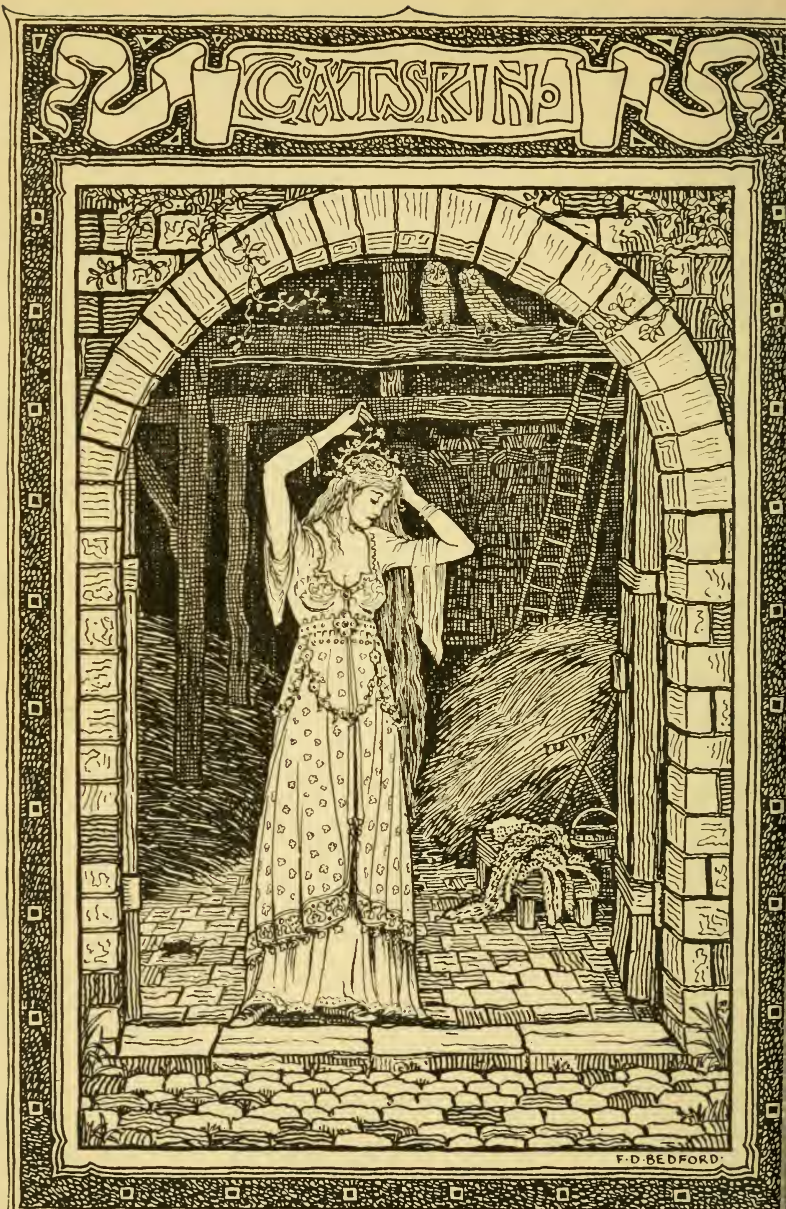
CATSKIN
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I

CATSKIN

A WEALTHY nobleman had a wife whom he loved well. He was most ambitious to have a son to whom he could leave his name and his titles. But the first child given him was a daughter.

He bore his disappointment as best he might. "Let us hope," said he, "that the next will be a boy."

After about a twelvemonth he had another child, and again it was a girl. He was now very irritated, and his wife could not get him out of his sorry temper. He used bad words. "If," said he, "the next that comes be a girl, I will turn her out of the house."

A year passed, and then the nobleman's wife had another baby, and again it was a girl.

He was so angry that he would not look at it, and his wife had the greatest difficulty in persuading him to keep the child at home. He only consented to do so in the hope that his next child might be a boy. He used worse words than before. But one year passed, and then another, and then a third, and no other children arrived. So the nobleman became more morose, and showed great dislike to his youngest child, because she was a girl and not a boy. So from bad words he went to bad acts. He did not even kiss her, or speak to her kindly. Nevertheless, he provided that she should be well instructed, and he gave her dresses suitable to her rank.

At a very early age he fulfilled his resolution to have her sent away. She was confided to one who had ever been a good friend to her mother in the country far away from home, and her father never went to see her, never seemed to care when was her birthday; he regarded her as an encumbrance, for whom he was obliged to pay money to have her properly dressed and fed and educated.

Now when to full stature
  This maiden was grown,
And found from her father
  No love to her shown,
She cried, "I no longer
  Will lie 'neath his frown:
I'm resolvèd to travel
  The land up and down."

Now hearken, good people,
  The cream of the jest,
In what sort of manner
  This damsel was dressed.
Of catskins she made her
  A garment all hair,
The which for a covering
  She daily did wear.

Her own rich attire,
  Her jewels beside,
All up in a bundle
  Securely were tied.
And seeking her fortune
  Away did she fare,
With cap all of catskins
  About her brown hair.

Now she came, in this singular garment made all of catskins, after a long walk, to a castle gate near a town, and, being very weary, she seated herself on the steps of the castle gate. The time was winter, and the snow lay on the ground, and but for her warm dress of catskins she would have perished.

The dogs barked furiously, and jumped snarling and snapping about her; they thought she was some strange beast.

Then the lady of the castle, hearing the noise, came to the door, and she ordered the dogs to be quiet. She wondered at seeing one dressed all in fur seated on the steps. The lady asked what manner of person or animal that was. Then the girl stood up and took off her cap, and her beautiful brown hair fell down over her shoulders, and the lady saw that this was no beast, but a girl.

She said—

"Whence comest thou, maiden,
  And what wouldst thou have?"
She said, "A night's lodging
  In your stable I crave."
The lady said to her,
  "I grant your desire.
Come into the kitchen,
  And stand by the fire."

Then she thankèd the lady,
She went with great haste,
And there she was gazed on
From highest to least.
And being well warmèd,
Her hunger was great,
They gave her a plate
Of good porridge to eat.

And then to an outhouse
The damsel was led,
Where soon in the fresh straw
She made her a bed.
And when in the morning
The daylight she saw,
Her gowns and her jewels
She hid in the straw.

Then the girl came into the kitchen, and asked if she might do some service there.

The cook replied, that he would take her as a scullion, to wash up the dishes, and turn the spit, and brush out the ashes in the oven.

"What sayest thou, maiden,
Dost thou will to abide?"
"With all my heart truly,"
To him she replied.

The damsel wore only her habit made of catskins, and she spoke little or none, and would say nothing as to whence she came, nor what was her name. So the cook and the servants, and also the lord and his lady, called her by no other name than Catskin.

Time passed, and Catskin worked hard in the kitchen, and was gentle and obedient and obliging.

Now the lord of the castle had an only son, a tall and handsome young man, aged twenty, and he was wont to go a-hunting and to play bowls; and Catskin often saw him, though he never noticed her.

It fell out that the king came to the town, and there was accordingly much entertainment given to him, and the mayor and corporation announced that they would have three splendid balls in the Guild Hall on three consecutive nights for the entertainment of the king. The nobleman's son was invited, and prepared to go.

Then Catskin plucked up courage, and said to the lady, "I pray you, madam, suffer me to go to the ball to-night; I have worked hard for a twelvemonth and a day, and have had no holiday pleasure."

When the lady heard this, she was very angry, and she had a ladle in her hand, and with it she struck the girl on the back with such force that she broke the ladle in two. Thereupon, crying, Catskin ran out of the kitchen, and hid herself in the barn.

Presently she heard a sound outside, and, jumping forth, saw the young nobleman mount his horse to go away to the ball.

Now one of the serving-men saw Catskin's face peeping out, so he ran and laid hold of her, drew her forth into the courtyard, and said to his master "See, sir! here is the scullion girl—she has been crying that she would go to the ball."

Then the young man laughed, and said, "Catskin, will you dance with me?"

She answered, "Ah, sir, if it were to chance that I could get to the ball, indeed I would."

"Be it so, Catskin; I shall expect you."

Then, laughing heartily, he rode away.

No sooner was he gone than Catskin put off her fur dress, washed herself, combed out her beautiful brown hair, that she wore under a cap from which hung seven cats' tails, and clothed herself in fine linen and lace, and a beautiful silken dress, the colour of the blue sky in spring, and she decorated her hair with daisies. And when thus dressed, she tripped away to the town, and was admitted into the great hall, and danced that evening with the young nobleman.

He did not know who she was, but he thought that she was the most beautiful girl he had ever seen.

> "The dance being done,
>   The young squire did say,
> 'Fair lady, where live you?
>   Now tell me, I pray.'
> The answer she made him
>   Was—"Sir, I will tell:
> At the sign of the Ladle
>   That is broken, I dwell.'"

Now, during the dance, very nimbly, Catskin slipped away, and hastened over the fields back to the castle, went into the barn, and threw off and concealed her silken dress. She covered herself again with catskins, and put over her hair the fur cap with the seven pussy-cat tails; and was as comical an object as ever. Very soon also her face and hands were grimy, for the cook was going to bake, and he made her go into the oven, and brush out all the ashes that were there. You may believe me, there was great talk among the servants about the beautiful lady in the sky-blue silk who had danced at the ball. For there had been the serving-men of the young nobleman there, who had attended on the guests, and they told how their master had danced with this beautiful and unknown lady.

Some laughed at Catskin and said to her, "Hey, Catskin! how would you have liked to be there? That would have been rare sport to see you with your cat tails flying about. I warrant the king would have led you out to dance the hay."[1]

"Very like he would," answered Catskin. Whereat all fell a-laughing more loudly than ever.

Then the noble mistress of the house came into the kitchen, and the girl went before her, and said, "Dear lady, may I attend the ball this night? The servants say that the king will dance the hay with me if I go." Thereat the lady was so wroth and shamed at the foolishness of the scullion girl, that she caught up a skimmer and struck her on the back with it, and broke it in two.

Catskin ran off crying, and hid in the straw, till she heard a stirring in the court, and she looked forth at the door, and saw that the young lord was mounting to ride to the ball.

She was again noticed, and once more the serving-men drew her forth, crying and abashed, before their master; and they said to him, "See! here is Catskin, who desires to dance with the king."

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[1] An old English country dance.

"I will lay my life, Catskin," said the young man, "if you appear at the ball, the king will reckon it rare sport to dance a hay with you."

Then he rode away, and laughed so long and so loud, that she could hear him laughing after he was out of her sight.

So soon as she could hear no more of his laughter, then Catskin went back into the barn, she washed herself, combed out her beautiful hair, and she wove a wreath of lilies of the valley and put it on her head, and she dressed herself in finest linen and lace, and put over her a gown of green silk like the lawns in early May.

And as she came forth from the barn, she heard all the bells of all the churches ringing, for that the king was passing through the streets going to the ball. So she hasted and reached the town, and fell in with the train of the king's court and entered the Guild Hall with his nobles and ladies, and when she came in, her beauty outshone that of all the ladies, and her dress was more lovely than that of any noble or his dame who was present.

Now it happened that the king turned and saw this fair maid in grass-green gown with lilies of the valley on her head, and he at once came up to her and asked if he might open the ball with her, and dance a hay. Catskin was looked upon with envy and surprise by all the ladies, and they said to each other, "Who can this be?"

Now the young nobleman was all impatience for the dance of the hay to be ended, that he might ask the unknown lady for her hand.

As soon as he could, he went to her, and asked her to tread with him a galliard. And as they were dancing, he said, "Surely, fair damsel, you deceived me yesterday. I have been all over the town inquiring for the sign of the Broken Ladle, and have been assured there is none such. Tell me now, I pray thee, where thou dwellest."

Then she answered, "I think, fair sir, you did not look near enough to home. If you desire to know my lodging, it is at the sign of the Broken Skimmer." Presently she slipped away, hurried home, hid in the barn, and took off her beautiful green gown.

Next morning she appeared in her catskin dress as usual, with the cats' tails hanging about her ears, and, I warrant you, was soon dirty enough, for the cook gave her a muck-fork and bade her go and clean out the pigstyes.

I warrant you, also, there was great talk among the servants that day about the strange lady with whom the king had opened the ball.

And the cook laughed and said, "Heigh, Catskin! I thought he was to have danced the hay with you."

And all the servants laughed heartily at the idea, and those who were holding dishes let them fall and broke them, and one who was mixing a custard upset the whole over the floor and wasted it—all because of the laughter at the thought of the king dancing with Catskin.

As for the young master, he returned thoughtful. He was asked by his mother with whom he had danced, and he said:—

"For two nights at the ball
  There was seen a ladye,
The sweetest of beauties
  Eyes ever did see.
She was the best dancer
  In all the whole place,
And she strangely resembled
  Our Catskin in face.

Had she not been dressèd
  In costly degree,
I'd have sworn that it was
  Our own Catskin's bodye."

When the lady came down into the kitchen, then once more Catskin stood forth, and asked her if she might this time be allowed to go to the ball, to see the king, and the princes, and the nobles, and all the ladies in their rainbow dresses. The lady was so angry at her being thus persistent, that, having a basin of water in her hand, she threw it over Catskin, and bade her begone for a fool.

Then shaking her wet ears
  Out o' doors she did run,
And dressèd herself
  All in gold like the sun.

She washed herself and combed out her beautiful hair, and she had plaited a wreath of marigolds, and these she set on her head. But she clothed her fair body in finest linen and lace, and over all put a golden silk dress like wheat when fully ripe.

This time she did not look forth when the nobleman's son was mounting his horse to ride to the ball. She heard him call, "Catskin! Catskin! where art thou?" But she would not let herself be seen, so he rode away in ill humour at not having spoken with her. He was sore perplexed in mind because the lady with whom he had twice danced wondrously resembled the scullion girl in his mother's kitchen.

As he rode, all the bells in all the church towers were ringing, and, as they rang, they seemed to say—

"Catskin, Catskin, made to win,
Cat without and queen within."

Soon after he had left, Catskin started from the barn, and arrived just in the right time, and entered the Guild Hall in the retinue of the queen, whose procession followed that of the king.

Now the young nobleman was on the watch, and directly he saw her, he went to her, and asked if she would dance with him all that evening; he would not surrender her hand, no, not even to the king if he desired it.

She consented. Now he looked harder at her than ever before.

Then the dance being ended,
  The young squire, said he,
"From whence may you come,
  Fairest lady, tell me?"
Her answer was—"Sir,
  You shall soon know the same,
From the sign of the Basin
  Of spilt water I came."

This time the young man was resolved not to let her go without following her, and he watched her every movement, and when she slipped away, he hasted after her. And as she ran, the marigolds in her crown fell one by one, and all along the way there were strewn marigolds. The night was dark, but the marigolds shone like stars, and the young man followed her track by the fallen flowers. And they led him to his father's barn, and at the door lay her crown. Every one of the marigolds had fallen out of it.

The young man stooped, picked up the crown, and went into the barn. Then—

He said, "O brave Catskin,
  I find it is thee,
Who on these three nights
  Has so charmèd me.
Thou sweetest of maidens
  Eyes ever beheld,
With joy and contentment
  My heart now is filled.

Thou art our cook's scullion,
  But, as I have life,
Grant me thy heart's love,
  I will make thee my wife.
And thou shalt have maidens
  To answer thy call."
"Oh, that cannot be, sir!
  I've no portion at all."

"Thy beauty's thy portion,
  My joy and my dear,
I prize it more precious
  Than thousands a year.

For my parents consent
  I have schemed a trick:
I will go to my bed,
  I will feign myself sick.

Then no one shall tend me
  But thou, I profess.
So, one day and two days,
  In thy richest dress
Thou shalt be a-clad, love;
  And when there draw nigh,
My parents to see me,
  Whilst sick I do lie,
I'll tell them I love thee.
  To save my sweet life,
I'll say the sole medicine
  Is Catskin for wife."

Catskin consented to this arrangement, and forthwith the young man took to his bed and professed himself to be very sick.

The father and mother, who loved him dearly, sent for a doctor, and he looked at his tongue, and said it was coated, then felt his pulse, and found it irregular, and took his temperature, which he pronounced abnormal.

The parents were dreadfully alarmed, and asked where the seat of the complaint was. The doctor said it was in the pericardium. This made the mother swoon in her husband's arms.

The sick man now begged that he might be nursed by Catskin, and, as the doctor said that he must not be contradicted in anything, his father and mother consented, but thought the request a very strange one.

It may well be believed, that so soon as Catskin and the young man were alone, they laughed and made merry, and he bade her quickly go and put on one of her grand dresses.

Now his lady mother had gone down into the kitchen to prepare her son a cordial elixir, according to the recipe given by the doctor; and this was the recipe:—

2 oz. oil of squills
2 ,, earthworms
2 ,, vervain
2 ,, Spanish flies
2 ,, neats' feet
Assafœtida and cayenne pepper to taste.

When she came up with this delectable cordial in her hand and entered the room, to her amazement there she saw a beautiful damsel dressed in silk of heaven's hue, with a crown of daisies like stars on her flowing brown hair.

She was so taken aback, so frightened, that she dropped the cordial, and the vessel was broken, and the elixir spilled. She was speechless with amazement, and thought that a fairy had appeared. But, anxious above all things for her son's health, she hastened down into the kitchen again, to prepare a cordial elixir according to the same recipe.

When she had done this, she ascended with it again to the sick-room; and as she drew near, she heard a voice singing to the lute.

She remained listening, and this is what she heard the voice sing—

"Through the cool shady woods
As I was ranging,
I heard the pretty birds
Notes sweetly changing.
Down by a meadow-side
Where runs a river,
A little boy I espied
With bow and quiver.

'Little boy, tell me, say,
Why thou art hiding,
Art thou some runaway,
And hast no biding?'
'I am no runaway.
Venus my mother,
She gave me leave to play
When I came hither.'

'Little boy, with thy bow
Why dost thou threaten?
It is not long ago
Since thou wast beaten.
Thy wanton mother fair,
Venus, will chide thee;
Of arrows be more spare,
Or thou must hide thee.'

Then little Cupid laughed,
Caught his bow nimble,
Shot forth a fatal shaft
Which made me tremble.
'Go tell my gallant fair
Thou canst discover
What all the passions are
Of a fond lover.'"

Then the lady thrust open the door, and saw, seated by his window, a beautiful girl clothed in grass-green silk, with a lace collar over her shoulders and a wreath of lilies of the valley on her brown hair. The window was open, and the air blew in and fluttered her hair about, and made all the white bells of the lilies dance, and it seemed as though her hair and the pure flowers were all dancing on her head to the sound of her lute, and the song she sang—

"Go tell my gallant fair
Thou canst discover
What all the passions are
Of a fond lover."

As she sang this, the beautiful girl turned her face from the window and looked at the young man lying sick on the bed, and the lady of the house, his mother, recognised the face of Catskin.

She was so astonished that she let fall the cordial, and it was spilt over the floor, so that there was not one drop left for her son to imbibe.

Her senses were in such a whirl that she could not speak, she could not advance, she could not think. So she shut the door, and ran speechless down into the kitchen, to prepare the cordial a third time.

But alas and alack a day! servants are careless. The cook, not having Catskin to assist, had bidden a stable-boy come in and be scullion for the nonce; and this urchin, having seen the recipe written by the doctor, which the lady had left on the kitchen table, had taken it to light a fire with. The lady was in dismay when she found that this precious recipe was lost. She therefore turned to a book written by her great-great-grandmother, a notable lady for making confects and strong waters, and took at random out of it another recipe. This was it—

Of oil of cloves	1 drop
Of honeycomb	every particle
1 lemon	well squeezed
Of butter	1 lb.

A few peeled almonds cut in slices.
Dissolve over a clear fire and mix well.

The lady at once proceeded to make this decoction. When it was done, she poured it out, and lo! it was—Butter Scotch.

She stood in great doubt what to do, when at that moment trumpets sounded, and the servants, all rushing to the windows, away from their work,—as the manner of servants is,—saw the king, who had arrived with his court, and the queen on one side and the archbishop on the other.

It had been noised abroad that the nobleman's son was ill, and the king, who was very amiable, had resolved on coming himself to inquire after him, and, if he were permitted, to see him. He had also brought with him his own physician, to look at the patient's tongue, feel his pulse, and take his temperature. The lady, holding a plate of the most beautiful Oriental china in her hand, on which was a great slab of butter scotch, with almonds in it, at once hasted to meet the king and answer his kind inquiries.

The king said that he would greatly like to see the sick youth, and appoint his own doctor to examine and prescribe for him.

Accordingly the lady conducted him and the queen, and the archbishop, and the physician; and all the court ladies and gentlemen in waiting, the master of the horse, the chamberlain, the high sheriff of the county, preceded by his javelin men, marched up the stairs to the door of the sick-room.

When the door was opened—what did they all see? This is what they saw.

In the midst of the room, on the highly polished floor, was a beautiful damsel, dressed in silk the colour of golden wheat, with marigolds in her hair, dancing a corranto; and the sick man was raised on his elbow, and was watching her graceful movements with great delight.

As she danced, the marigolds fell from her hair, and she danced round and in and out among the fallen yellow flowers, singing as she danced, and was so intent not to tread on a blossom, or disturb it with her silken skirts, that she did not see those who had come to the door.

The king, the queen, the archbishop, the physician, the chamberlain, the lords and ladies, the grand sheriff, and the great javelins stood silent, in admiration, as did also the lady of the house, with the plate of butter-scotch in her hand.

All at once the king exclaimed, "Why, surely this is the very lady with whom I danced the hay."

At his words Catskin started, became crimson, and ceased dancing; she retreated to the window, and the patient pulled the bedclothes over his head.

The king and all his court now entered, and went to the side of the bed, where the king issued his royal mandate that the sick man should show his head above the bed-clothes. This the patient dared not disobey. So he let himself be seen, and the physician was required to proceed with the diagnosis of the case. He, however, respectfully requested that the family doctor might be invited to be present, as it was against the etiquette of the faculty to interfere with each other's practice.

The village and family doctor happened at this moment to arrive, and he was called up into the room.

The court physician proceeded to look at the sick man's tongue, and said he considered it coated.

"So I said," observed the family doctor.

"And his pulse is irregular."

"So I said," observed the family doctor.

"And his temperature is abnormal."

"My very words," said the family doctor.

A consultation was now proposed, and the two practitioners adjourned to an adjoining cabinet, whilst the king, and the archbishop, and all the court, the nobleman and his lady, the parents of the youth, remained in breathless expectation. After half an hour the two doctors issued from the adjoining cabinet, and the court physician said, with immense solemnity, "There is nothing in the case to cause immediate alarm. My brother practitioner and I have well weighed the case, and have drawn out a prescription which, if strictly followed, will, we believe, produce the happiest results."

Then he unfolded a scroll, and handed it to the archbishop. It contained but these words—

Matrimony
cum Butter scotch, *quant. suff.*

The very hearing of the recipe sufficed to make the sick man jump out of bed.

Next day, with great triumph,
  And joy, and good cheer,
There arrived many coaches
  From far and from near;
When, much like a goddess
  In festal array,
Fair Catskin was married
  To the squire that day.

The days they were many
  The wedding did last,
With many a topping
  And gallant repast.
Oh hark the bells ringing
  All over the town;
See flasks of canary
  Flow merrily round.

So Catskin was married to the young gentleman, the son of the noble in whose house she had served as scullion.

We might end the story of Catskin here, and yet, were we to do so, we should omit an incident which marks how good she was, and deserving of the happy fortune that fell to her.

It had fallen out in this wise with her father. Her mother was dead. A fever had come on in the house, and had swept away both her mother and sisters; so that the old man was left alone, and in his age he was sorrowful and desolate. Now he began to think of his daughter whom he had discarded. He resolved to pay her a visit, for he had heard of her marriage.

He dressed like a beggar
  And went to the gate,
Where stood his sweet daughter,
  Now noble and great.
He cried, "Gentle lady,
  A poor man I be,
And forced by necessity
  To ask charity."

With a blush she demanded
  The place whence he came.
Then, with that he told her,
  As likewise his name.
She cried, "I'm your daughter
  Who slighted was so,
Yet, nevertheless, sir,
  Thee kindness I'll show.

Through mercy, the Lord
  Has provided for me.
Pray, father, come in, sir,
  Be seated," said she.
The best of provision
  The house could afford,
For making him welcome,
  Was placed on the board.

She said, "You are welcome
  Feed hearty, I pray,
And, if you are willing,
  With me you shall stay

So long as you live, sir."
  He then made reply,
"I only have come here,
  Your love I would try.

Through mercy, my daughter,
  I'm rich, and not poor,
I've red gold and silver
  Heaped up in my store.
And for the kind favour
  At your hands I've found,
For portion I'll give you
  Full ten thousand pound."

A few days after he sold all his land, and came to his daughter, gave her what he had promised, and lived in love with her, well attended to, the rest of his days.

NOTE.—The old English story of "Catskin," which exists in ballad form, has been driven out by the French tale of "Cinderella." The latter is a very good story, and it was very well told by Perault. In some points the English tale is preferable. The English story has relation also to Perault's "Peau d'Ane.' In German the series are those of "Aschenpüttel" and "Allerleirauch." The catskin in the English story is an ass's hide in Perault's, and a coat of coarse hair in the German. The story is known throughout Europe. In the English tale there is no glass slipper dropped. In connection with this element, I may refer to Rhodope, who became Queen of Egypt by dropping her slipper (Strabo, xxii. 808; Ælian, *Hist. var.* xiii. 33). The English ballad, which is without poetic merit, has been several times reprinted. It was printed in Aldermary Churchyard about 1720. For a full account of the story and its ramifications and variants, see J. S. Moore, *The Pictorial Book of Ballads*, 1849, vol. ii. p. 145; and still fuller in A. Lang's *Cinderella*, 345 *Variants*, printed for the Folk-Lore Society, 1893.

Of the ballad there are distinct exemplars, one printed at Pitt's Wholesale Toy and Marble Warehouse, 69A S. Andrew St., Seven Dials; the other, "Printed and sold, wholesale and retail, by J. Evans, No. 41 Long Lane, Smithfield." It is in the Roxburghe Collection, vol. iii. p. 770; Douce Coll. iv. 105. Another copy in the British Museum (press mark, 11621, 6. 3, art. 8), to the tune of "The Wandering Jew," printed for T. Norris. It occurs also in a Garland entitled *The Wandering Young Gentlewoman's Garland*; and this begins—

> Ye fathers and mothers, and children also,
> Come draw near unto me, and soon ye shall know, etc.

whereas the other form of the ballad begins—

> There once was a gentleman grand,
> Who lived in his country seat;
> He wanted an heir to his land,
> For he'd nothing but daughters yet.

II

THE GARDENER PRINCE

II

THE GARDENER PRINCE

FAR, far away in the blue distance of time, took place a great invasion of Bohemia. The savage Huns came pouring over Europe from the steppes of Northern Asia, carrying havoc and death wherever they went. They were little dark men with black, beady eyes, and they sat their horses as if of one flesh with them.

In the great destruction that overtook Prague, the capital of Bohemia, the town was fired, and the Huns, breaking into the royal palace, carried off the nurse with the young prince, and swept away far west, burning and destroying everywhere till they reached France, and there they were encountered on the plains of Chalons by the Franks and Visigoths under Ætius, and were totally routed. Attila, king of the Huns, after this battle, gathered the remnants of his force in the camp, surrounded himself with a ring of waggons, piled up the saddles of his horses, and stood on the top of this immense mass, torch in hand, ready to set fire to all, and perish, he and his men, in the pyre, should the Franks be able to burst through the enclosure. The conquerors did not deem it wise to drive him to desperation, and suffered him and the remnants of his savage army to retreat into Germany. This was in the year 451.

The nurse of the Prince of Bohemia had perished on the way, and the little child had been taken charge of by a Hun woman. In the flight she threw away the child, and it was found and taken charge of by a poor man, whose wife, having no children of her own, was glad to adopt it.

The child, who was called Oriol, grew up in the cottage of these good people, and believed them to be his parents. The reason why he was named Oriol was this. When the man found him, he was lying in a field of buttercups, and he had amused himself with pulling off the heads of the flowers, and had made himself a bed of the shining blossoms, and a pillow as well. The sun was shining brightly, and when the man saw the babe lying amidst buttercup flowers, the reflection made him think the child was all golden, and he exclaimed, "Why, this is a golden babe!" As *or* is gold in the French tongue, he called him thenceforth Oriol.

When the boy was grown to man's estate, he was sent to be a gardener in the king's palace; and the flowers he cultivated seemed to know that someone was set over them who loved them, for they flourished in a marvellous manner. Flowers like to be made much of, to be talked to, and encouraged to grow, and Oriol always had a good word to say to his plants. He became warmly attached to them, and they to him.

Now the king had got a daughter called Marcella, and she was wont to look through her window at the garden, and she saw the young gardener, and thought how clever he was with his flowers. She was never allowed to go abroad without her governess, but one day an irresistible longing came over her to go into the garden and see the flowers.

Now there was in this garden a rose, and this rose had the property that whoever picked it would be pricked thereby to the heart, and could never be cured save by the gardener who had cultivated the rose.

Of this the Princess Marcella knew nothing. She did not ask leave of anyone, but stole downstairs and went to the garden.

There stood the gardener at the gate,
  And in each hand a flower;
"O pretty maid, come in," he said,
  "And view my beauteous bower.

The lily it shall be thy smock,
  The jonquil shoe thy feet;
Thy gown shall be the ten-week stock,
  To make thee fair and sweet.

The gilly-flower shall deck thy head,
  Thy way with herbs I'll strew;
Thy stockings shall be marigold,
  Thy gloves the violet blue."

But the fair princess had seen a lovely rose the flowers of which were crimson as blood, and so thick that they hid the leaves and the thorns. She said to the gardener—

"I will not have the gilly-flower,
Nor herbs my path to strew,
Nor stockings of the marigold,
Nor gloves of violet blue.

I will not have the ten-week stock,
Nor jonquils to my shoon;
But I will have the red, red rose
That flowereth in June."

The gardener, who knew how sharp and dangerous were the thorns of this rose, endeavoured to dissuade her. He said—

"The red, red rose it hath a thorn
That pierceth to the bone."

But she answered—

"I little heed thy idle rede.
I will have that or none."

Again he endeavoured to dissuade her—

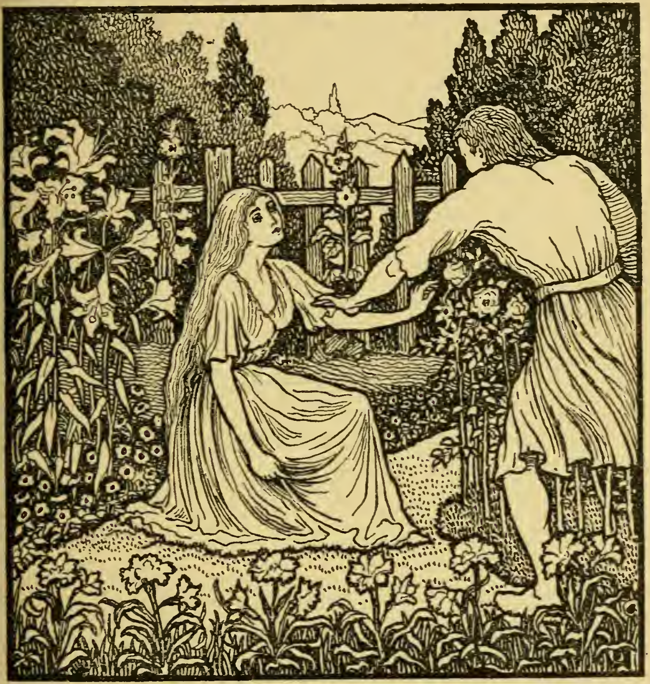
"The red, red rose it hath a thorn
That pierceth to the heart."

But she answered—

"The red, red rose, oh, I will have.
I little heed the smart."

She stooped down unto the ground
To pluck the rose so red;
The thorn it pierced her to the heart,
And this fair maid was dead.

Now, when the gardener saw this, he was alarmed, and he took her in his arms, carried her upstairs, and laid her on her bed.



There she was found by the governess, lying as one asleep. But all the efforts to wake her were in vain. At last she became so frightened that she ran for the king and queen, and they came. They shook the princess, but could not wake her. They called her by every term of endearment, but she answered not. Then they sent for the Court physician, and he came, and tried every sort of remedy, but all were in vain. The maid remained fast asleep as one dead; there was no rousing her. She neither breathed nor moved, nor did her heart beat, yet her cheeks were fresh as roses, and so she remained day by day unchanging. The parents were in sore distress, and they would not allow her to be buried, because they really did not know whether she were asleep or dead.

Then they consulted the Court astrologer, and he looked at the stars, and read therein that none might restore the Princess save the gardener, and that he would marry her.

When the king heard this, he was much perplexed what to do. He did not desire that his daughter should lie in this trance, without ever awaking; and, on the other hand, he did not relish the notion of having his gardener become his son-in-law. But he considered, and resolved to make Oriol restore this princess to life, and after that he would put the young man to death, and so frustrate the prophecy.

Accordingly, he sent a waiting-maid of the princess to the garden.

> There stood the gardener at the gate,
> With cypress in his hand,
> And he did say, "Let no fair may
> Come into Dead Maid's Land."

So the waiting-girl stood outside, and told the gardener what was wanted of him, to come and recover the princess of her trance-like sleep.

He accordingly obeyed, and was brought upstairs and shown where she lay. Then he stooped, and he found the thorn that was run into her heart, and he drew it forth, and the moment he had done this, she opened her eyes, gave a long sigh, looked at him, and began to speak.

Immediately the king gave orders that he should be taken and cast to wild beasts. The king had lions in cages, and he was wont to feed them with malefactors who were sentenced to death. For at that time butcher's meat was very expensive, as a murrain had been introduced into the land by the Huns, and it had swept off most of the cattle; and it never wholly disappeared. But if butcher's meat was dear and scarce, malefactors were cheap and abundant.

According to command, Oriol was cast to the lions. But Marcella had a twin brother called Marcellus, and he was greatly shocked and grieved when he heard his father's order; he entreated the king to spare the gardener, and, when he could not move him, he ran to the prison to beseech the gaoler to throw in his private tutor instead of the gardener. The noble-minded prince thought by this means his father's injustice might be prevented, and himself delivered for a time from his daily lessons. The gaoler, however, told him that his intervention came too late, for that Oriol was already cast to the wild beasts.

But what was the surprise of the prince and of the gaoler when they found that the lions refused to touch the gardener, and crouched round him in respectful attitudes.

Now it is known to all the world that the lion will not touch royal blood. So the prince exclaimed that he was sure Oriol came of kingly stock, and he ran and told his father, who gave orders for the gardener to be removed from the lions' den, and retained in prison till he issued further instructions.

When the princess awoke from her sleep, she could think only of the gardener. It was the nature of the rose that when the thorn was withdrawn, she who had been wounded would fall in love with the first person her opening eyes rested on; and as it chanced, when Marcella raised her lids, she saw Oriol. So, though the sleep-giving quality of the thorn was overcome when the thorn was extracted, yet the subtle poison of love remained in her veins.

She had none but her brother to whom she could tell her feelings. She was very unhappy, because she knew that the king, her father, reserved her deliverer for a cruel death; and the Prince Marcellus particularly resented that his royal parent had objected to having the private tutor thrown to the lions, in default of criminals.

The brother and sister consulted together, and resolved to effect the escape of the gardener, and to fly with him to England, where she could marry Oriol, and where, as Marcellus believed, he, himself, would not be held to his lessons.

Accordingly, the prince went to the harbour and contrived to hire a ship in which they might sail to England. Then he went to the prison and persuaded the gaoler to allow him to see the gardener.

To Oriol he communicated the plan for his escape and their flight. Then Oriol replied—

> "I'll go to my lady at break of day,
> I'll carry my lady far away.
> But how shall I manage to snap my chain?
> And how can I my liberty gain?"

Then the prince gave him a tiny steel file, which he had hidden in his sleeve, and with this he was to work through the iron bars of his window, and so escape. He, Marcellus, would bring a ladder and put it outside the prison, so that when the bars were filed through, Oriol might escape with the ladder, and by means of the ladder release Marcella from the tower of the palace in which she was locked up. Accordingly, the young prince went to the harbour and gave orders that everything should be ready for sailing as soon as he arrived with his companions; then he went back, and found his tutor in a great way because he was late for his Latin lesson, and was growling and threatening to report him to his father.

Oriol worked with the steel file during the night, and succeeded in cutting through the bars. Then he thrust himself out of the window, and found Marcellus below with the ladder. He quickly descended. Then the prince bade him take the ladder and go to the palace and release his sister, whilst he went to the ship, to have all ready to start the instant they arrived.

Now when Oriol came below the window of the princess, he found to his consternation that the ladder was far too short. She was above, looking out, ready to fly, but could not be reached.

What was to be done? All the palace doors were locked and barred, and there were guards set to keep them.

The princess was equal to the occasion. She had the most lovely golden hair in the world, and now

The lady undid her golden hair,
She cut it off with a golden sheer;
The lady took out her silver pin,
Her hair it was neither short nor thin;
She twisted it in, and she twisted it out,
And she made a ladder both strong and stout,
She wove it up and she wove it down,
And she made a ladder to reach the ground.

Now, when she had thus plaited and twisted her hair, and had formed of it a golden ladder, she fastened it to her window and looked forth. But when she saw what a distance she had to descend, her heart began to fail

"Alack!" she said, "but I do not dare
To plant my feet on this ladder of hair.
Alack!" she said, "but were I to fall,
I should dash my blood on the castle wall."

Then Oriol saw that the night was spent, and the day at hand, and he was afraid lest he should be taken, and the plan come to naught. So he put his hand to the ladder.

Oh, and he did climb by the golden thread
That was wove of the hair of his lady's head,
Oh, and he did mount by the golden stair
That was fashioned all out of his lady's hair.
The hair it was neither short nor thin,
And was fastened above with a silver pin.

When Oriol came to the window, then he took the princess in his arms and descended with her.

> Adown the ladder of gold they came
> As over the hills the sun did flame.

So they escaped together to the harbour, where the prince was awaiting them, and as soon as they were on board, the anchor was hove, the sail spread, and they stood out to sea.

"Now for love and freedom," said Oriol.

" And no more Latin lessons," said the prince.

No sooner was the flight of the gardener with the children of the king and queen discovered, than the utmost commotion ensued in the palace and town. The king at once consulted his astrologer, and the astrologer called in the assistance of a witch, and they together brewed a storm that broke with fury on the sea; the waves ran mountains high, and poured into the ship, that speedily became a wreck. It was driven back upon the French coast and dashed to pieces. Prince Marcellus escaped on one plank, the Princess Marcella on another, and Oriol, who clung to the mast, was carried far, far away, and was finally picked up by a ship and conveyed to a distant land. He believed that the dear princess and the generous young prince had been swallowed up by the hungry sea.

The king and queen were rejoiced to recover their children. The king was extremely incensed at the neglect of the gaoler, at having allowed the window bars to be filed through unobserved, and he condemned him to death. When the gaoler had been put to death, he told the Princess Marcella, his daughter, that the gardener had been caught and executed, and that he was then being carried to burial.

When she and her brother heard this, they were in the deepest distress, and they ran to where the funeral was passing, and followed the dead in great grief. But before the corpse was consigned to the earth, the princess plucked off the pall that was thrown over it, and to her great joy discovered that the dead man was the gaoler and not her beloved gardener. She now found it unendurable to remain without knowledge of Oriol. She often walked in the garden, and whenever she passed the crimson rose, the scent of it caused her love to wax stronger. So one night she took an old suit of her brother's clothes, dressed herself in it, and ran away. She embarked on board a ship destined for foreign parts, and sailed away in the disguise of a boy.

We must now see what had become of Oriol.

After many adventures, he arrived at the Court of Bohemia, where his father, now an old man, was king.

When the Huns had been routed at Chalons, the realms they had overrun recovered, the princes they had defeated plucked up courage and emerged from their places of refuge. The Bohemians had rebuilt Prague, and made it more beautiful than before, and they had stuck up the heads of Huns who had been killed all along the walls, as a series of knobs, which was very picturesque, and also terrifying to aggressors.

The king was grieved at the loss of his son. He made inquiries, but could obtain no news of him, and he was sore afraid lest, after his death without heirs of his own body, there might ensue civil war among rival claimants, which would be productive of great misery.

It fell out that Oriol arrived in Bohemia; he had gone through various adventures that need not be detailed, and at length, weary, footsore, and covered with dust, he was approaching the gates of Prague, and he saw before him the walls, with little round white balls set along the top of the battlements, and he could not understand what they were. Now it happened that at this very moment the king and queen and the princes were feasting and making merry. Then, suddenly, in the hall appeared a black cloud, and the cloud opened, and in the midst of it was seen the ghost of the old nurse, who had long been dead. She cried out, "O king! the dear prince of whom I was given charge is now approaching the gates of Prague, wayworn and dust-soiled. Go forth to meet and welcome him. You will know him by his pedigree, which I tattooed on his back with a needle and a little lampblack. After my death he was for a little while in the care of a Hun woman, but she threw him away, and he was picked up on a bed of buttercups by a poor peasant. As this peasant and his wife could not read, they never deciphered what was written on his back, and of course the prince himself was physically incapable of studying his pedigree in the place where I tattoed it."

Having uttered these words, the ghost vanished.

The king, overjoyed, leaped from table, and all his nobles rose. The whole of the court hasted from the palace, and the news spread like wildfire through the town. Every bell in every church was pealed, the people shouted and danced, and the children ran on the walls, and were so excited that they began to play ball with the Huns' heads, that were now bleached quite white, and were like lawn tennis balls, as white, as round, and as empty.

The gates were thrown open, and forth came the king and queen and all the court.

And when they saw the wayworn, dusty traveller coming along, they precipitated themselves upon him, threw him down, and tore the clothes off his back, and there, sure enough, from the nape of his neck, and over his shoulder-blades, and down his vertebral column was his entire pedigree from Adam, and his real name, which was Wenceslas, and not Oriol at all.

Then they pulled the prince up on his feet, and as he was much shaken and surprised by the treatment he had received, they set him on a horse and led him through Prague, with his back exposed, that all the people who could read might study his pedigree, and convince themselves that this was their very and true prince. Those people who could not read tore their hair with rage and compunction, and as much hair was pulled out on that day as sufficed to stuff cushions for many years after, and mix with the plaster wherewith houses were plastered for a like period.

Now Oriol's troubles were at an end. Yet was he not perfectly happy, because he thought of Princess Marcella, and he secretly pined for her.

It has already been told how she ran away in boy's clothes. It fell out, most happily, that she rambled into Bohemia, and when she arrived at Prague, she offered herself as page at the palace, and was taken. What was her astonishment to recognise in the young Prince Wenceslas the man who had been the gardener Oriol.

She was abashed, and did not quite know what to do. But she was happy to be at his side, to run by his horse when he went hunting, and to wait behind him at table when he dined.

One day the prince went out fishing, and he made his little foot-page carry his wallet, in which were the fish he caught.

The day was very hot, and the glare on the water wearied his eyes, and made him sleepy, so he lay down with his head on his page's lap and fell asleep.

Whilst he was asleep, Marcella plucked all the buttercups within reach and strewed them about him, till he was completely surrounded with them, much as when found by the French peasant.

Presently he woke, and, looking about, was greatly surprised. He said, " How came all these golden flowers about me ? "

Then the page answered, " Master, I picked them."

" But," said the prince, " why did you do it ? "

" Master," answered the page, " I was formerly in service to a princess, and she told me a story of how a little babe was once found by a peasant among buttercups, and the sun shone on them, and the reflection over the child was such, that the peasant cried out, 'It is a golden babe!' and he called it Oriol."

"I never told that tale but to one—and that was the Princess Marcella," exclaimed Wenceslas.

Then the little foot-page said, "It was even from her I heard it."

When the prince learned this, he was greatly agitated; he sighed, and the tears came into his eyes, and he said, "I shall never, never be happy till I see my dear Marcella again."

"Ah, master," exclaimed the page, "I have her portrait; but do you know that she was wrecked and drowned in a terrible storm."

When the prince heard that, his tears began to flow freely. He spoke no more, than to say he had no pleasure any more in fishing, and that the sole thing that could gratify him was to see the portrait of the princess. He bade the page produce it immediately.

"Master," said the page, "the portrait is life-size. You must have patience till you return to Prague."

"And you must absolutely surrender that picture to me," said the prince. "I can no longer live without it—that is to say, if it be a good likeness."

"Sir," said the page, "on my word of honour it is a *speaking* likeness."

"If you will give it me, you shall have what you desire."

"I ask for one thing only," said the page,—"your hand."

"Even that," said Wenceslas; "I will cut it off and give it you freely, if I may have the portrait."

Now, when they were returned to the city, Wencelas ran to his father and mother, and said to them, "Oh, my dear parents, I have not told you till now why I have resisted all your urgency to see me married. I loved and I was beloved; and the princess I loved was Marcella of France. She was more lovely than the day. Her hair was longer than that of any woman in the world, but she cut it off for the love of me. It was like to the finest gold. But, alas! she is dead. The cruel sea swallowed her up. Come and follow me, and I will show you her picture. But, first throw over your robes veils of mourning and black mantles. Let a solemn funeral march be played, and do you, father and mother, and all the court, walk in slow and sad procession, to the tolling of bells and the strains of the Dead March, and with handkerchiefs to your eyes, and lemons in your hands, into the apartment where is the picture of my beloved princess, now, alas! no more. Let us do this in respect to her memory."

Accordingly the king and queen and all the court put black mantles over their sumptuous robes, and the marshal walked first with his silver mace. "One, two. One, two. Slow march!" ordered the marshal, and he rapped with his silver mace upon the floor, as a signal to proceed. And all, two and two, came on, to the tolling of bells, and the solemn, awe-inspiring strains of the band. The scene was so moving that all wept. Then they came into the chamber appointed by his little foot-page, at the extremity of which was a large gold frame with a curtain thrown over it. The prince, filled with impatience, rushed to the curtain and pulled it down.

There, within the frame, stood—not a canvas covered with paint, but the smiling, speaking image itself—the beautiful Marcella, in the flesh, dressed in the robes of a princess, with her golden hair flowing below her shoulders—so much had her hair grown since it was cut off to make a ladder by which to escape.

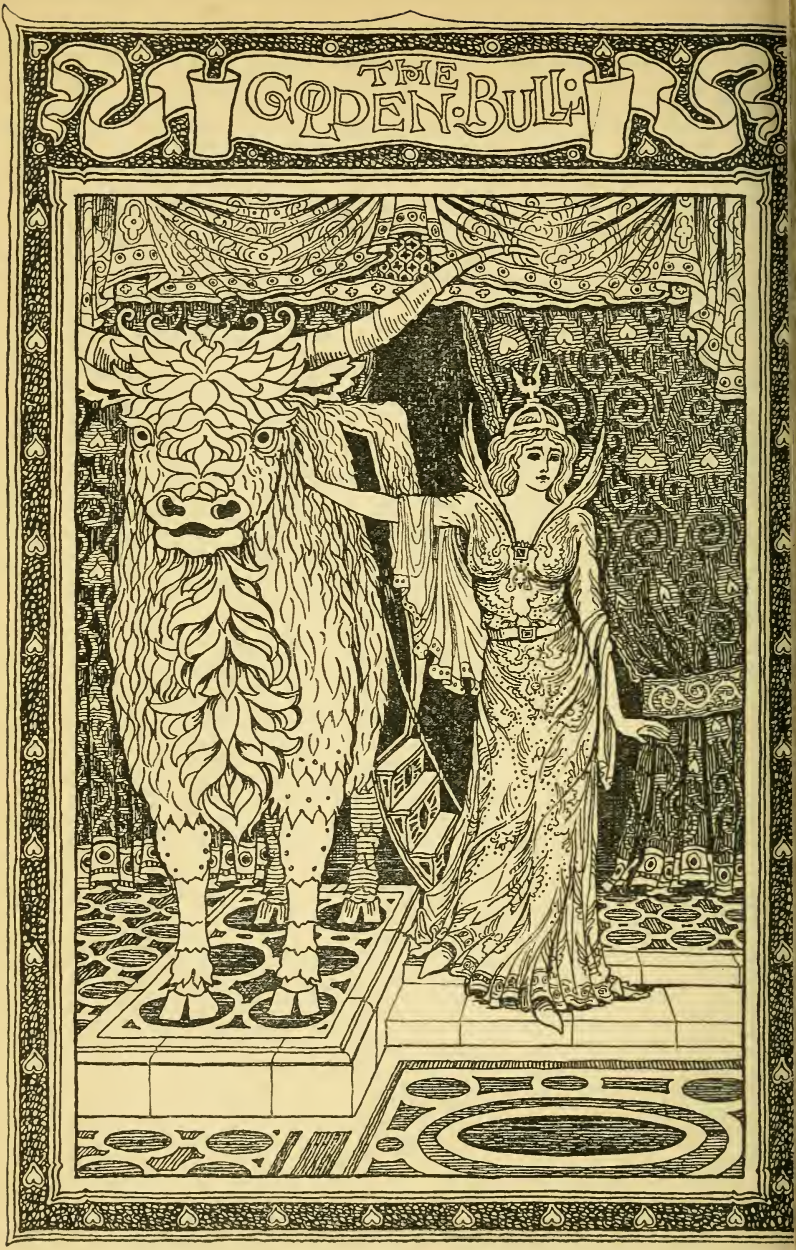
She stepped through the frame, and said, "Prince Wenceslas, the picture is yours. Your hand!"

Then the black mantles and veils fell off from the king and queen and court, and they flung aside their pocket handkerchiefs and the lemons, and the band struck up a merry dance tune, and the bells began to peal cheerily, and the king took the queen by the hand and began to caper, and the court followed suit, and danced and kicked out their feet, and crowed and laughed with pleasure. The people in the street shouted and turned heads over heels for delight, and the children began to pelt each other with the skulls of the Huns.

Never had been seen greater mirth in the city of Prague. A despatch was at once sent to Paris to summon the Prince Marcellus for the wedding. Then the king said, "I believe somewhere up in the nursery is a little daughter of mine, I made no account of, born to me in my old age. I will certainly marry her to Prince Marcellus, and so cement the links of union between my nation and that of the Franks." And so was it done.

Note.—This story is based on the old English ballad entitled "The Garland of Princely Lovers," printed at the end of the seventeenth or beginning of the eighteenth century. It is certainly a pretty tale. To some extent "A Winter's Tale" agrees with it. The veiled statue in one is the covered picture in the other. Bohemia is the scene of both. I have worked into the story the fragmentary ballad of the Gardener, which seems to fit it well, and the incident of the lady making a ladder with her hair, which is a reminiscence of a nursery ballad I remember indistinctly from early days.

The ballad of the Gardener is to be found in Child's *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, No. 219, from Kinloch and Buchan. A west of England version is in my *Songs of the West*. It is most probably a mere fragment of a long story, the point of which is now lost, but I strongly suspect that the fragment that remains belonged originally to an English version of the myth of Thorn-rose.


THE GOLDEN·BULL·

III

THE GOLDEN BULL

A CERTAIN king was a very stubborn man. When he took a thing into his head, he resolved to carry it through at any cost. Now, there was an island in the seas that washed his shores, ruled over by a very old king, who took so much snuff that he dirtied not only his face, but his hands and all his royal garments. Unless he were new dressed every day, he made such a disgusting mess of himself that he was not fit to be seen. Accordingly, as it would cripple the finances, were he to be given robes in keeping with his dignity fresh every day, he was usually put in a cupboard, and only brought out on great occasions. Now the stubborn king of whom I first spoke had resolved to marry his daughter to the snuffy old king. He was an extremely ambitious man, and he thought that as the snuffy king spent nearly all his time in a cupboard, if this snuffy king were married to his daughter, he would be able to rule the kingdom of the snuffy king through his daughter, as well as his own.

When the princess heard what was designed, she was greatly distressed, and implored her father to desist from his purpose. But he could not be turned from it.

Now she was the more disposed to resist his will, because a handsome young prince from a distant realm had come to her father's court and asked for her hand. She had seen him, and she liked him very well, and when she learned that he never took snuff, her liking became ardent love.

Her father turned a deaf ear to her entreaties, and to the solicitations of the young prince, who was very sad, and would have departed to his own country, but that the king urged him to remain over the wedding festivities.

As the princess was unable to dissuade her father from the proposed union with the snuffy old king, she entreated that at least she might be given three suitable dresses in which to be married, in which to travel, and in which to appear at the court of her intended husband.

One of these dresses was to be like the sky, besprent with stars, the second was to be like the sky with clouds flying in it, and the third was to be embroidered all over with birds. One thing further she desired, and that was to be given a golden bull. The king her father agreed to this.

Accordingly, she went to the goldsmith who was to make the Golden Bull, and she told him to make it hollow, and to contrive a door in the side that could only be opened by herself by means of a small key; and that was to be so neatly managed that no one could see the door or the keyhole when the bull was closed.

All was done exactly as she had desired, and the Golden Bull was brought into her room before the wedding, and very beautifully wrought it was. It was of the size of a real bull, and was all of pure gold, only it had rubies for eyes and silver horns.

Now when it was time for her to be dressed for the wedding, and the snuffy old king was arrived, the princess put on her the blue robe sprinkled with stars, and, taking with her the two other dresses, she stepped into the bull, closed the door behind her, and snap — she was fast inside.

People wondered and waited, but she did not appear. The king, her father, sent to her room for her, and learned with great rage that she had disappeared—run away, it was believed, and taken her beautiful dresses with her. The old king, the bridegroom, began to cry, for he had been kept from snuff for twenty-four hours, to make him look clean and respectable, and he had gone through this terrible privation all for nothing.

Messengers were sent in all directions, but no signs of the lost princess were found. No one could imagine what had become of her. So the snuffy king took to snuff again, and went back to his island. The sailors put him in a cask in the bilge-water, to be out of the way on the voyage, and he floated about there snuffing to his heart's content.

The king, the father of the princess, gave the Golden Bull as a present to the prince who had asked for the princess's hand, as some amends for the refusal of the lady, his daughter.

The prince had the golden bull conveyed on board ship, and sailed away for his own land.

The prince was afraid lest the sailors should scratch their names on the Golden Bull, or scrape off dust from it, accordingly he had it set in his own cabin.

One night, whilst he was asleep, and the sea was calm, the princess opened the door in the bull's side, came out, went on deck, and looked at the still sea that glittered in the moonlight. She was in her blue dress all strewn with stars, and as she moved she sparkled. The steersman saw her, and was dreadfully alarmed. She said nothing to him, and after a while she went below, but before stepping into the bull again, she went to the side of the sleeping prince, bent over him, and kissed his lips.

He woke with a start, and thought he saw a wonderful vision of a sparkling woman glide away and vanish. In fact, when he woke, the princess had fled, gone inside the bull, and shut the door once more.

During the day he heard the sailors talk of the appearance of a beautiful spirit in the ship, and he thought this must have something to do with what he had himself seen.

The prince was sorely puzzled what to make of that which he had seen. He had caught sight of the figure for a moment only, and that as he woke from sleep. If it had not been that the steersman declared he had beheld an exactly similar figure on the deck in the moonlight, he would have supposed himself a prey to night fancies.

As he was thinking this matter over in his cabin, he noticed a blue ribbon lying on the floor near the Golden Bull. It was embroidered with stars of pure silver, with a diamond in the midst of each.

The prince considered this for some time. He was perfectly certain that he had had nothing of the kind in his cabin before. It matched precisely with the dress of the mysterious figure of which he had seen a glimpse during the night.

He folded it up and put it near his heart, and fell into great wonder as to how this would end.

Now the prince found himself thinking a great deal about the princess who was to have been married to the snuffy old king, and he marvelled how she could have disappeared without leaving a trace behind.

There was one thing that the prince considered it was his duty to do, and that was to have the vessel searched from deck to hold, to make quite certain that no one was concealed in it, that no one was on board except himself and the crew.

A search was accordingly made, but it led to no result whatever, for they did not think of examining the inside of the Golden Bull, not knowing from the weight that it was hollow, nor being able to see that there was a door in the side, so cunningly contrived had that been by the goldsmith to whom the princess had entrusted the work.

There are ever bad men in the world, and among the bad men at that time was the captain of the ship in which was the prince. He had cast his covetous eyes on the Golden Bull, and he thought that if he could get rid of the prince, he might be able to secure this valuable object for himself, so one day, after he had told his intention to some of the sailors who were likewise of covetous minds, he threw the prince into the sea.

However, there are good men as well as bad in the world, and there were of both on the vessel. The mate, when he saw what was done, hastily threw a hencoop overboard, and the prince caught at the coop, which floated, and he was saved from drowning. The waves and the wind washed him ashore on a little island.

The captain now made great revelry. He had put poison into the drink of all those sailors who had not joined him, and there was great drinking in the cabin which had been the prince's. But just as the mate was putting his cup to his lips, all at once a lady's arm was passed over his shoulder, and a delicate hand snatched the vessel from his lips, turned it over, and spilled the contents on the floor. He started and looked round, but saw nothing save the Golden Bull. He was sitting with his back to this when the thing happened. All the other men, after drinking, fell down on the floor, with the exception of the captain. Those who had been true to the prince never rose again, for they had been poisoned, but the rest were drunken and drowsy, and they slept.

The captain threw himself on the prince's bed, and very soon he also slept. The mate pretended to be like the rest, but he soon saw what turn matters had taken, and presently he rose, stepped on deck, and, taking the steering into his hands, turned the ship round, and sailed back as quickly as the wind would carry her, and before morning was at the shore upon which the prince had been cast up.

He saw the prince on the beach, and signed to him to come on board. The prince did this, and he and the mate consulted what should be done. They went down together into the cabin and bound the captain. Then they roused the drunken sailors; and found that those on whom they thought they could rely were all dead.

Now the prince was in a very difficult pass. He needed the assistance of the sailors to manage the vessel. So he spoke to them, and declared that their treachery was counteracted, that he knew they had been persuaded to do wrong by the captain, whom he had bound with ropes, and would hang when he came to land, and that he would forgive them if they proved faithful for the rest of the voyage.

They all promised to make amends for the past; and the prince, who was of a generous nature, did not mistrust them. The mate was obliged at times to take his rest, and then the crew were able, unobserved and unheard, to contrive a fresh treachery, which was to release the captain from his bonds.

One night, when the sea was calm, and the prince was asleep on his bed, the captain, discharged from his bonds by his confederates, entered the cabin with a dagger in his hand, and stole in stocking-soles towards the bed where the prince lay.

He raised his right hand to strike to the prince's heart, and to make sure that he smote him a death-wound at once, he drew down the coverlet so as to expose his breast to the blade.

But at that moment he was caught from behind, the dagger struck out of his hand, and he was thrown on the floor. He uttered a loud cry, and the prince, starting from sleep, saw a mysterious figure like a lady in a dress dappled and grey, who was withdrawing, and who suddenly disappeared.

His attention was mainly directed to the captain, and he sprang on him and drove the dagger into his heart.

Thus was he happily delivered from this great danger; and when the false-hearted sailors saw that all their machinations fell through, and that their captain was dead, their courage failed, and they asked forgiveness again, which the prince accorded them.

He now appointed the mate to be captain of the ship.

He was much perplexed to understand how and by whom he had been aided. Some one had most assuredly cast the treacherous captain down.

Of this the prince was made more confident when he found on his pillow a veil of the finest lawn, light as a cloud. This must have been dropped by the person or spirit which had come to his assistance. He ordered the ship to be again searched from stern to stern, but no one was found save those who were well known to be in the vessel.

Nothing further is related of the voyage till the prince reached his native land.

Then, with great care, the Golden Bull was transported from the ship to his own apartment in the palace.

The king his father was grieved to find that his son returned sad at heart. In fact, his mind ran on the beautiful princess, who was to have been married to the snuffy old king, but who had disappeared. He found that he could not get her out of his thoughts, and often in his dreams at night he fancied he saw her gliding through his room, and that she sometimes came to his side, stooped and kissed him. Then, if he woke, he saw a shadowy figure step back into the darkness and vanish.

Now, one night, a very marvellous thing happened. It was the eve of May Day, and all the young men had gone to the woods singing, to bring the may bushes home to plant them at the doors of their true loves.

The prince could not sleep. He was thinking that these youths all had their true loves, and he was without one. The only princess for whom he ever could care was lost, and whither gone none knew.

He heard the singers go by under his window, and this was their song—

Awake, ye pretty maids, awake
  Refreshed from dewy dream,
And haste to dairy-house and take
  For us a dish of cream.

If not a dish of yellow cream,
  Then give us kisses three,
The woodland bower is white with flower,
  And green is every tree.

A branch of may we bear about,
  Before the door it stands,
There's not a sprout unbudded out,
  The work of God's own hands.

Awake, awake, ye pretty maids,
  And take the maybush in,
Or 'twill be gone ere to-morrow morn,
  And you'll have none within.

At that time of the year there was plenty of light in the sky, and though the prince kept his eyes closed, he could see everything in his room.

All at once, as the sound of the song died away, he beheld the side of the Golden Bull open and a beautiful lady issue from it. She came towards him. He saw that she was dressed in a gown that was covered with all the birds of the air. There was not light enough for him to distinguish her features, but he was almost sure this was the lost princess. She came straight towards him, stooped, and kissed his lips.

In a moment he had his arms round her, and held her, and asked her who she was.

Then she was obliged to tell him the truth, and she explained to him how she had remained hidden in the Golden Bull, and that she alone had the key whereby the side could be opened.

The prince then bade her go back inside, and remain there till he had returned from a progress he had to make through the kingdom, to receive the homage of all the people, as his father, who was very old, was about to abdicate. Before she retired, he gave her a costly ring from his finger, and he told her not to open her door till he returned and knocked three times at the side of the bull.

Then she retreated, and he started on his journey. But before he started, his mother had told him that his father and she had arranged to have him married to the daughter of the king of an adjoining country. This made the prince very agitated, and he assured his mother it would not be possible for him to do so, as his heart was otherwise engaged. He locked the door of his chamber, gave the key to his mother, and bade her on no account allow anyone to enter the room during his absence.

After the prince had been gone a few days, three ladies of the court, who were great favourites of the queen, asked to be allowed to look at the prince's private apartments during his absence. They had heard that he had there a most marvellous work of art, a bull formed of pure gold, with silver horns and ruby eyes.

The queen thought there could be no great harm in letting them in, so she gave them the key, and they entered the prince's chamber and examined everything there with the utmost inquisitiveness.

But what most interested them was the Golden Bull. They looked at it from every side; and presently one of the ladies said, "I feel as if I could not leave the place till I had kicked it."

"Nor I," said the second.

"Nor I," said the third.

Then each of the ladies kicked the Golden Bull, whereupon, to their vast astonishment, the door in the side of the bull opened, and the beautiful princess stepped out. Alas! she had mistaken their kicks for the strokes that the prince had assured her would be the signal of his return.

Now when the three ladies saw her, they cried out, "This is the witch who has won the heart of the prince, so that he cannot marry the Princess Borrioboola, whom his mother, our most gracious queen, and his royal father have designed for him. Let us make away with her, and then he will do his duty."

So these three cruel women laid their hands on the unfortunate princess, drew her on to a balcony, and threw her into the river beneath.

Happily, as she fell, her garments spread on the waves, and they were of such a texture that they did not draw her under. On the contrary, all the embroidered birds thereon at once began to flutter their wings and chirp, and stay her up, so that they bore her along on the surface down the stream, till she reached a point where she could step ashore with convenience.

Then all the birds that were embroidered on her gown became mute and motionless, and were embroidery only.

The princess sat sad under a tree. Then she divested herself of the dress of embroidered birds, and under it was the suit of the clouds. She folded up the bird suit and hid it in the branches of the tree.

Presently a serving-maid came to the river to fetch water, and she saw the beautiful lady sitting under the tree weeping, in her gown of clouds. The maid was so astonished, that she ran back to the house where she served and told her master. Now the master happened to be the faithful mate, whom the prince had advanced to be captain.

Hearing the strange tale of the serving-girl, he ran down to the water's edge, and saw the beautiful lady in a suit of clouds, sitting weeping under a tree. He approached her with great respect, and she told him all her story.

Then he mused a while, and presently said, "I advise you to come to my house, where you shall be well treated, and we must wait till the return of the prince, and see what he says and advises."

This seemed excellent judgment, and the princess gladly agreed to it.

We must now return to the palace, and see what was taking place there. The ladies told the queen what they had done, and she approved of their conduct. Then they advised that the Golden Bull should be removed to a place where the prince might not see it, and that they should brew for him the Water of Oblivion. To this his mother gladly consented.

The Golden Bull was conveyed to the royal mint to be melted up. The three ladies, who knew something of witchcraft, set to work, and concocted a draught which would take away from anyone who drank of it, the memory of the past.

Now when they had brewed this, they brought it to the queen, and she undertook to give it to her son on his return.

A few days later, the prince came home, full of impatience to see his dear princess, who lived in the Golden Bull.

No sooner had he arrived at the palace, than his mother met him at the entrance with a cup in her hand, and said to him, "My dear son, you shall not cross the threshold till you have drunk to the health of your father and me."

"My dearest mother," he replied, "there is nothing you bid me—except to marry the Princess Borrioboola,—that I will not do;" and he drank off the contents of the goblet.

Immediately all recollection of his voyage, of the princess, of the Golden Bull, passed from his mind. He went to his room, and did not notice that the Golden Bull had been removed. When his father informed him that his nuptials with the Princess Borrioboola were to take place in three weeks, he acquiesced as a matter of course.

Therefore great gladness came over the hearts of the king and queen, and they ordered immediate preparations for the wedding.

The tidings soon reached the princess, who was staying with the captain, and she wept bitterly at the fickleness of the youth whose life she had saved and who had professed such sincere affection.

The captain in vain endeavoured to comfort her—she would not be comforted, for her heart was completely won.

At last she heard that the prince was engaging many servants to attend on him and the princess who was to be his wife. So, without telling even her good friend the captain, she disguised herself as a page, and offered herself to wait upon the prince. She was at once accepted, and ordered to attend at the splendid banquet that was to be given on the evening before the marriage. The poor disguised princess was obliged in seeming unconcern to see him, and to stand by whilst he offered a thousand civilities to the Princess Borrioboola. Her heart was nearly broken. She inquired of his attendants about the Golden Bull, and heard that it had been taken to be melted up to be struck in medals to commemorate the event of the prince's marriage. She further learned that the prince had not noticed the removal of the bull, nor had made any inquiries about it.

At the banquet she stood behind his chair, and brought to him the wine in his goblet. Then she slipped the ring from her finger and dropped it in. The prince emptied his goblet, and, finding something at the bottom, looked closely, and found a ring. He took it out, considered it attentively, and uttered a loud cry. With the recovery of his ring, his memory had returned, for the virtue of the stone in the ring was such that it expelled all poison and destroyed all witchcraft.

He sprang from table, and asked after the Golden Bull. When he heard that it was to be melted up, he was very wroth, and insisted on being conveyed immediately to the mint. Regardless of everything save the Golden Bull and his sweet princess, he hastened from the palace, and arrived at the mint just as the bull was about to be destroyed. He saw that the door in the side was open and that it was empty. Then he uttered loud cries, demanding the princess who had lived in the bull.

He ran back to the palace, brandishing his sword, and he declared that he would be the death of any man who could not tell him what had become of the princess who lived inside the bull.

When the Princess Borrioboola heard this, she thought he must be demented, and she hastily ordered her equipage, that she might depart. She had no desire to be the wife of a maniac.

Presently the whole palace was in an uproar. The Princess Borrioboola departed. The prince rushed from one room to another, with his sword drawn, crying out that he must find his idolised princess.

Then, he considered that she had worn the ring, and he began to call out for the page who had given him his cup.

But the page could nowhere be found. But instead of the page, there entered his own beautiful princess, in her garment of embroidered birds, and all the birds were fluttering their wings and singing. She was a marvellous sight, and it was wonderful to hear the music made by her gown.

When the prince saw her, he was delighted. He shed floods of tears and clasped her to his heart.

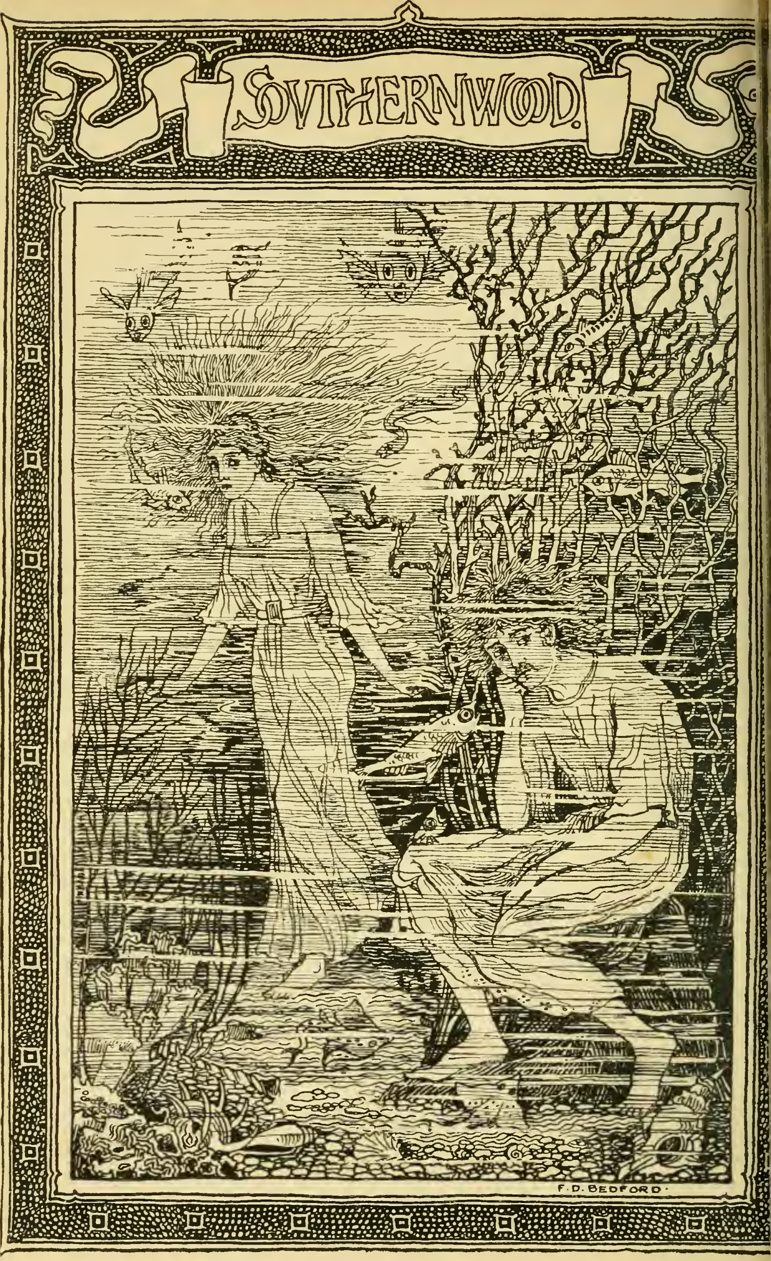
The wedding took place next day, and the Golden Bull was actually melted up to form medals in commemoration of this happy marriage. The prince urgently entreated the princess to tell him who were the three ladies who had thrown her into the river, and he would have them burned alive; but so good of heart was she, that she refused to tell him, and they escaped without being punished, which was more than they deserved.

I have read in ancient history that the Princess Borrioboola was married to the snuffy old king, and that they lived happily together, and that she got to like tobacco, and took to chewing a quid. But you cannot trust all history.

NOTE.—The story of the Golden Bull is based on an old English ballad of the same title, which is merely a folk-tale thrown into wretched jingling rhyme. The full title is "The Golden Bull, or the Garland of Love's Craftiness." The date of the ballad is the middle or end of last century. It was printed in Boro' Churchyard. In several points it resembles Catskin. Not only in both are there the three suits of garments, but in the Golden Bull the prince falls sick. In Catskin sickness is feigned. I have altered the conclusion in order to avoid the too close similarity, and have also a little amplified the middle of the tale with the appearances of the lady emerging from the bull. One characteristic feature belonging to the opening of the story, which classifies it with a whole series of folk-tales, for very good reasons I have had to modify.

There is no copy of this ballad in the Roxburghe Collection, nor in the Douce, but I believe there is one in the Madder Collection, in Cambridge House Library. It was printed and sold by J. Evans, 41 Long Lane.

Tom Dibdin one day bought the little chap-book tale, and was so struck with it that he composed out of it the popular musical sketch or operetta of "The Casket," 1803.


SOUTHERNWOOD.
F. D. BEDFORD.

IV

SOUTHERNWOOD

THERE was once a girl. She lived by the sea. Every day she went down on the sea wall, and sat there on the chalkstones of which the wall was built, and stuck sprigs of southernwood in her hair, and rubbed the leaves in her hands. And because she always smelt of southernwood, both because of the sprigs in her hair, and because she rubbed the leaves in her hands, and because she sat among the bushes and on the young shoots, for this reason folk called her Southernwood. Whether she had any other name, and if so, what it was, I do not know.

One day, as she sat on the sea wall looking out to sea, she saw the sharp fin of a shark coming along, and a fish which the shark was pursuing leaped out of the water and fell into her lap, and lay there gasping and turning all colours, green, and yellow, and blue, and pink.

Then Southernwood picked flints and chalkstones out of the wall, and threw them at the shark, and drove it away, back into the deep sea. And when she saw it was gone, she put back the little rainbow fish into the water, and it swam away quite joyous.

Next day, when Southernwood came down to the beach and sat on the sea wall, she saw the rainbow fish come swimming to her, and it had a gold ball in its mouth, and it rolled the golden ball to her feet, and then swam away.

Southernwood picked up the ball and played with it. She threw it up and caught it again; she rolled it before her, and ran after it.

As she was going home, she passed along the paling of the park of the Reeve of Lynn. She stood at the gate, which was ajar, and looked in to see the beautiful trees, and flowers, and peacocks. And as she stood looking, the ball rolled out of her hand and ran in at the gate. Then she was frightened, for she could not get the ball again without going after it. To go after it within the park of the Reeve of Lynn she thought would be a great liberty.

However, she saw no one about, and she could not bear to lose her golden ball, so she slipped in at the gate, and as she stooped to pick up the ball, she touched the gate with her heel, and it swang together, and shut with a snap. Then she was fast as a bird in a snare, or a rat in a trap.

She was dreadfully unhappy, and tried in vain to open the gate. She wept, and she pulled at the handle till the blood ran out under her nails; but she could not open it.

Then she saw coming towards her an old lady with snow-white hair, very stately, and very richly dressed, and she knew it was the Reeve's mother.

The lady said to her, "Now you are in my park, you must come and be my servant. You will have to clean the boots, and make the beds, and do the cooking, and mind the cellar, and wait at table. And for all that you shall have the great and unparaleled honour of being entitled the maid-of-all-work to His Excellence the Reeve of Lynn."

Southernwood could not help herself. She was fast in the grounds of the Reeve, and could not get out.

Then the lady began to instruct her as to the condition of affairs in the Reeverie, as the house was called.

"You must know and understand," said the lady, "that my son is a very worthy and affectionate character, *when his heart is in the right place.* But there,' continued she "is the rub. His heart straggles about. Sometimes he leaves it on the table, or in his portmanteau and it is lost. You have no idea what cruel things he will do when he is heartless. He will stick pins into cockchafers and spin them. He once tied the cat and dog together by their tails. He once took my pet bullfinch—but I will spare you the harrowing details. I had to turn everything up and down till I found and restored his heart to its right place, and then he was quite overcome with regret for the barbarities he had committed."

"That is very shocking," said Southernwood.

"You are right," said the lady. "You see my hair is turned silver. One lock turned white through his cruelties." She continued: "Sometimes his heart is in his stomach, and then he is excessively greedy. He is then not only greedy, but offensively dainty. He grumbles about his food, picks it, leaves half on his plate, and turns up his nose at all wines except the crustiest port and the driest Sillery."

"That is very disgusting," said Southernwood. "I have been taught to be content, and thankful for plain food."

"Quite right too," answered the lady. "It is disgusting, and his greediness and daintiness turned the second lock of my hair silver." She continued: "Sometimes his heart is in his pocket, and then he becomes outrageously avaricious. You must know that the duties of Reeve require him to impose and gather in the local taxes and rates of the town of Lynn. Now, when his heart is in his pocket, then he oppresses and tyrannises over the citizens of Lynn to such an extent, that, unless I picked his pocket, and restored his heart to the right place, a rebellion would break out, and he would have his reeveship taken from him."

"That is very painful," said Southernwood.

"It is extremely painful and distressing," answered the lady. "And his conduct in this matter has so troubled me that it has turned the third lock of my head white as snow. But I will proceed." Then she went on to say: "Sometimes he gets his heart down into his boots. You must know that one of the offices and duties and responsibilities of a Reeve is to call out and conduct the militia in times of peril. We are on the sea, and exposed to foreign invasion. The Danes make descents on us and ravage the country. On such occasions the Reeve is expected to marshal the forces of Lynn and fall on the enemy. But when my son has his heart in his boots, he runs away and hides in a mulberry bush, and leaves the militia to make head against the enemy undirected."

"That is simply scandalous," said Southernwood.

"It is as you say, scandalous," acquiesced the lady. "And his conduct in times of great national peril from invaders has turned the fourth lock of my hair to silver." Then the lady proceeded: "Sometimes my son gets his heart into his mouth, and then there is, I can assure you, nothing he will not blab. He reveals not only all family affairs, but also all the concerns of the town charities, which are managed by the Reeve and aldermen, and will not bear looking into. He has caused great confusion and irritation by his talkativeness on such occasions."

"That is most injudicious," said Southernwood.

"It is eminently injudicious," answered the lady; "and I have long feared that all participation in the direction and distribution of the charities will be taken from him—and then, where should we be? Solicitude on this account has turned to white the fifth lock of my hair. I will now tell you something more."

"I pray you proceed," said Southernwood; "what you relate is most interesting."

"Then," said the lady, "you must know that one of the offices of the Reeve is to be justice of the peace, or, as it is more elegantly put, of the quorum, which is an expression which nobody understands, and which therefore is regarded as poetical, and generally preferred. As justice of the quorum, all kinds of evil-doers, and those suspected as evil-doers, are brought before him on the bench. Now, not infrequently, so careless is my son that he leaves his heart on the window sill, and it gets cold. When he is cold-hearted, he judges with extreme hastiness, and is incapable of admitting any extenuation in the case of misdemeanours."

" That is very sad," said Southernwood.

" It is more than sad, it is inhuman," answered the Reeve's mother; " and his inhumanity on the Bench has turned my sixth lock snow-white. I will now proceed to explain what has blanched my last lock of hair. This is occasioned by his putting his heart on the hob, or too near the fire, or warming it in sack posset. Then he is unpleasantly warm-hearted. You may find on such occasions that he will chuck you under the chin, and try to kiss you, and even urge you to name the day—which," pursued the lady, " is clean ridiculous, as he is Reeve, and you in a menial position."

" This is positively terrifying," said Southernwood. " I do not feel inclined to accept your situation, madam."

" You cannot escape from it," answered the lady promptly. " Here you are, and here you remain, anyhow for one month."

" I shall be in mortal terror of the Reeve," said

Southernwood, "Is there no means, madam, whereby the heart of your son can be fixed in the right place. It seems to me, speaking with all due deference, that it is always wandering and losing itself, and getting where it should not be."

"I have considered that," said the lady; "and now you put it to me, I have a scheme which I anticipate will have the desired effect. I think, if you will assist me in melting some strong fish-glue that we may be able to put glue on his heart, and so fasten it solidly in the right place. It will then only be in very damp weather—damp, and warm, and relaxing—that we need entertain any solicitude about his heart becoming detached."

"I will assist you with great pleasure," said Southernwood.

Accordingly the lady and Southernwood filled the outer receptacle of the glue-pot with hot water, and put two spoonfuls of water with the glue.

"It must not be too weak," said the lady.

"Nor too stiff," said the maiden.

Then the Reeve of Lynn was fetched, and placed reclining on a sofa, and Southernwood gave him her golden ball to play with, whilst they melted the glue, and got his heart smeared with it. The mother had found him dozing, in a soporific condition, as she expressed it, because he had put his heart under the pillow on going to bed, and had forgotten it there. It had been found when the bed was made in the morning, and a good deal of feather-down adhered to it, because there was a hole in the pillow that had been neglected by the last maid, who was careless and a bad needlewoman, having been brought up with a sewing-machine from earliest infancy.

The Reeve remained quite pleased, playing with the golden ball, whilst his mother endeavoured to brush away the down from his heart.

Meanwhile the water in the pot boiled, and bubbled over. "The glue is melted and steaming," said Southernwood. Then the lady came to the glue-pot with the heart in her hand, but the steam came over her fingers and scalded them, and with an exclamation of pain, and not considering what she did, she dropped her son's heart, and it fell into the glue-pot and was completely immersed in the fluid fish-glue.

The Reeve uttered a shriek of agony—threw away the golden ball and writhed in extremity of torture on the floor. The lady in her terror and distress put her fingers into the pot to remove the heart, but burnt them so that she could do nothing.

"Quick! the sugar-tongs!" she shouted.

"Where are they, madam?" asked Southernwood. But before she received an answer the door was burst open, and in came the Queen of the Elves, in flaming rage, with lightning flashing from her eyes. She rushed to the fire and snatched up the glue-pot, then to the Reeve and caught him in her arms, and as she retired through the door she cried, "And is this the treatment my elf son receives among mortals!"

Then she disappeared, carrying with her the Reeve and his heart in the glue-pot.

Now after this the lady recovered her composure. She wept a great deal, and, sitting on the sofa, beckoned Southernwood to her. Southernwood prepared to seat herself, but the lady said, with dignity, through her tears, "Nay, not so. You occupy a menial position, so stand and listen to me." Then the lady said, "Now I am certain of what I long guessed, or, to put it more elegantly, entertained suspicions. *The Reeve was a changeling.* When he was a babe, or rather, when my babe was born, before he was christened, on one occasion, the nurse brought in some guava jelly into my room, and for a moment I turned my attention from my cherished infant and only child to the consumption of guava jelly. In that moment, it is my belief, the Queen of the Fairies effected a change. She carried off my son, who was the beautifullest, most virtuous and intelligent baby ever was seen at the age of eighteen hours, and she put her own brat in his place. This has been the occasion of all my sorrow and all my difficulty with the Reeve. You must know that the Reeveship of Lynn is hereditary in our family. His father died at the birth of the blessed babe; accordingly, from the cradle my infant was Reeve of Lynn; but his function and office and authority have all these many years been usurped by an elfin changeling, whose heart was rarely, if ever, in the right place."

"But," said Southernwood, "why should the Queen of the Elves have changed babes with you?"

"The reason, I have no doubt, is this. Every twenty years a full-grown elf has to be given up to the great whale, Leviathan, who lies in the Wash, which is that tract of sea into which discharge the Glen, the Nene, the Ouse, and the Nar, and on which we are situated here at Lynn. I strongly suspect that, in order to save some elfin youth from being sacrificed to the great Leviathan, this change has been effected, and my poor son is to be delivered over to the voracity of the monster; indeed, there is no saying but that he may already have fallen a victim."

Southernwood tried ineffectually to console her mistress. But, finding her efforts in vain, she picked up her golden ball and left the room. She went down into the park, and considered what had happened.

Now youthful hearts are buoyant, and she soon took pleasure in the beauties of the garden, and was especially attracted by some water lilies, silver and gold, that floated on a little pond in the park. She desired greatly to pluck one of these beautiful flowers, but in straining to get one, she let fall the golden ball, and it rolled into the water.

She could not think of not making every effort to recover the gift of the rainbow fish. So she took off her shoes and stockings and went into the pond. Then she stooped, but at once the ball rolled in deeper. So she waded to her knee. She could still see the ball shining through the water, so she stooped to take it. Again the ball rolled away, as her fingers touched it, and she was constrained to wade up to her waist. As the ball was still discernible, she put down her arm through the water, but in her effort to secure it touched it with her foot, and it rolled on, still farther to the middle of the pond. Then Southernwood waded on till the water reached her armpits.

As she saw the ball glimmering out of the depth, she made a dive, got her head under water, and grasped the ball.

But now, imagine what happened!

To her great surprise she found herself in a new world. She was walking on sparkling sands in which were beautiful shells, and trees of coral and waterweed grew before her, and the loveliest fish swam about and lodged in the branches of coral and weed.

As she looked about in the greatest admiration, she heard a sad voice lamenting, and she held her breath and listened. The voice was that of a young man, and he sang—

"Alack and a day that I must die
(The prickles are sharp, but the leaves are green),
And never again see the Norfolk sky
(And the sweet birds sing in the treen).

Alack and a day that the loathly whale
(The prickles are sharp, but the leaves are green),
Will swallow me up withouten fail
(And the sweet birds sing in the treen).

Alack and a day, I would see the sun
(The prickles are sharp, but the leaves are green),
Before my bonnie sweet life is done
(And the sweet birds sing in the treen)."

When Southernwood heard this, then, she was full of wonder and sorrow, for she remembered what the lady had said to her, and she stole along on tiptoe, to observe the singer unseen. She saw a beautiful young man sitting under a bush of coral. He was very pale and sad. He heard the rustle of her movements as she stirred the bushes and broke off the twigs, and he started to his feet and looked at her with amazement.

He asked who she was, and she told him all. Then she asked him why he wept and sang so doleful a ditty. And he said to her that he was in Elfinland, and it was the custom in Elfinland every twenty years to deliver up a full-grown elf to the great Leviathan who lived in Lynn Deeps in the Wash. At one time they used to give a child every ten years to the monster; but they considered that this was such a sacrifice, that it would be preferable to feed the loathly whale once in twenty years with a full-grown elf; and, he added, the elves did all in their power to secure human children in exchange for their own, that they might rear them up for the food of the monster. This is what had occurred to him. He had been carried away when in his cradle, because his mother had not watched him every moment night and day till he was christened. And now he was twenty, and the Elfin Queen was going to convey him to the Wash and cast him to the Leviathan. He said, moreover, that every time the lot was cast who was to provide the victim on the next occasion. On the last the lot had fallen to the Elfin Queen, and she must either sacrifice her own child or that of human parents. Accordingly, she had made an exchange, and had left her child with his mother, and had taken him away from his mother, and had nourished him up till now, and that night he was to be taken to be cast into the maw of the loathly whale.

When Southernwood heard this, she was much amazed, and she further asked the youth whether there was no hope of saving him.

He answered that there was. As it happened, that very day the Elf Queen had brought back her own son into Elfland, he was very ill because his heart had fallen into a glue-pot. Now, if only he, the human youth, could be rescued, then the Elf Queen would have to deliver up her recovered son; and as there was no probability of his heart ever being cleansed again from the adhesive and disgusting material in which it was enveloped, it would be no great matter if he were eaten.

Southernwood asked how the youth might be saved.

Then he answered and said, "This night, when the moon rises, a great train of elves will issue from the pond, which is the great entrance to Fairyland. Before them will travel the will o' the wisp, and you will hear fairy music. Then will come the elf-folk in three companies, on their tiny horses."

"How shall I know you," asked Southernwood, "when so many pass by?"

Then he replied—

"The very first band that passes by,
  Say nothing to that show.
The very next band that passes by,
  Say nothing and let it go."

"But when the third company passes, how shall I know you in that?" asked the maiden.

"O first let pass the black, black steed,
And then let pass the brown;
But when you see a milkwhite steed,
Then cast the rider down.

My right hand it shall wear a glove,
My left hand shall be bare;
And these the tokens I give you, love,
By which you'll know me there."

"But how," asked the maiden, "shall I be able to cast you off your milkwhite steed?"

"O you must take your golden ball,
And cast it unto me,
And if you'd make the white horse fall,
Then strike him above the knee."

"And when the horse is struck, what shall I do then?" asked Southernwood.

"O take me in your arms, fair maid,
And hold me to your heart.
Whate'er you see, be not afraid,
And never from me let part.

They'll turn me in your arms, fair lass,
To an adder and a worm;
But hold me fast, nor let me pass,
And none shall do you harm.

They'll turn me in your arms, fair lass,
To an adder and a snake;
But hold me fast, nor let me pass,
And all for my mother's sake.

They'll turn me in your arms, fair maid,
To a goose, and then a swan.
Then wrap your mantle, nor be afraid,
And again I'm a Christian man."

Now when the young man had said this, he bade Southernwood make haste to depart, before the elves should see her. If they were to find her in their realm, they might detain her there, and not suffer her to depart. Perhaps they might even retain her for the next occasion when the Leviathan had to be fed.

He bade her roll the golden ball before her, and follow where it led. She did so, and the ball rolled away, and she ran after it. Then she rose out of the water, first her head, then her shoulders, then her body to the waist. Lastly she rose to her knees, and she forthwith stepped on land.

Never one word did she speak of what she had seen and heard, but that night, just before the moon rose, she went into the garden and waited near the gate, for she knew that the elfin train would pass that way. Then presently she saw the horn of the moon glitter over the wall, and immediately a little will o' the wisp danced down the drive. And when it came to the gates, they opened of themselves, quite wide, and the flame passed through.

Next she heard the sweetest and softest music, so soft and sweet that she nearly closed her eyes and slept for pleasure. But there was spear-grass growing near, and she took the spear-grass and twisted it in her hair and pulled, and it drew her hair together with much pain, and that kept her awake.

The first band that passed consisted of fairy pages on tiny ponies.

Southernwood had not only been assured that the true Reeve of Lynn would not be in that company, but also she knew, by the size of those who rode, that among them he could not be.

The next band that passed consisted of fairy damosels, the maidens in waiting, the ladies of the bedchamber, the ladies of the bathroom, the ladies of the store-cupboard and the ladies of the dairy.

Southernwood had been told to let the second company pass unnoticed, and she did so, not only because informed that the true Reeve would not be there, but also because he obviously did not belong to a party that was made up of the other sex.

But when the third band passed, it was otherwise. This comprised all the nobles and knights of Fairyland, in their richest vestures, all magnificently attired, and riding beautiful horses.

Among them came the King of the Elves on a black steed, and Southernwood let him pass.

Next came the Queen of the Elves on a brown jennet, and she allowed her to ride by.

But when she saw a milkwhite steed, whereon rode a young man with one hand gloved, then she knew that this must be the true Reeve of Lynn, who was being taken to be devoured by the sea-monster in the Wash.

Then, with all her force, she threw the golden ball, and it struck the white palfrey a little above the knee. The horse stumbled, went down and rolled over, and his rider was flung on the grass.

Instantly Southernwood sprang to him, caught him in her arms, and folded her mantle about him.

There was a great cry and commotion among the elves, they came round the maid, and the knights levelled their spears and tilted at her, but could not touch her. Then the queen spoke a word of power; and immediately the beautiful youth in Southernwood's arms became a writhing, hideous serpent with three heads, that put forth forked tongues and threatened to bite her and spit poison. But she had a brave heart, and she did not let go her hold.

Then the queen spake a second word of power, and immediately the serpent became a great fire of flames and smoke in Southernwood's arms, rushing up and surrounding her face. But she remained firm, and wrapped her mantle the tighter about the fire, and it waxed faint.

Then the queen spake a third word of power, and at once the fire was transformed into a white swan. Southernwood held the great swan very fast, although it fluttered and struggled to disengage its wings.

Thereupon there rose a sighing and a sobbing, and the elves ran and came dragging after them the false Reeve of Lynn, the fairy changeling. The queen wept piteously, but it was of no avail, he must be the victim, as the true Reeve had been snatched from her power.

But it must be said that the intended victim seemed indifferent to his situation and regardless of his impending fate. This was perhaps due to the enormous amount of fish-glue that encased his heart, and had now hardened.

The train swept on, drawing the false Reeve with it. Then the gates closed, and no more of the elves was seen or heard.

Immediately the swan resumed the human shape. The true Reeve of Lynn slipped out of the arms of Southernwood, thanked her most gratefully for what she had done, and, taking her by the hand, conducted her to his mother, with the dignity and grace of a prince rather than of a reeve.

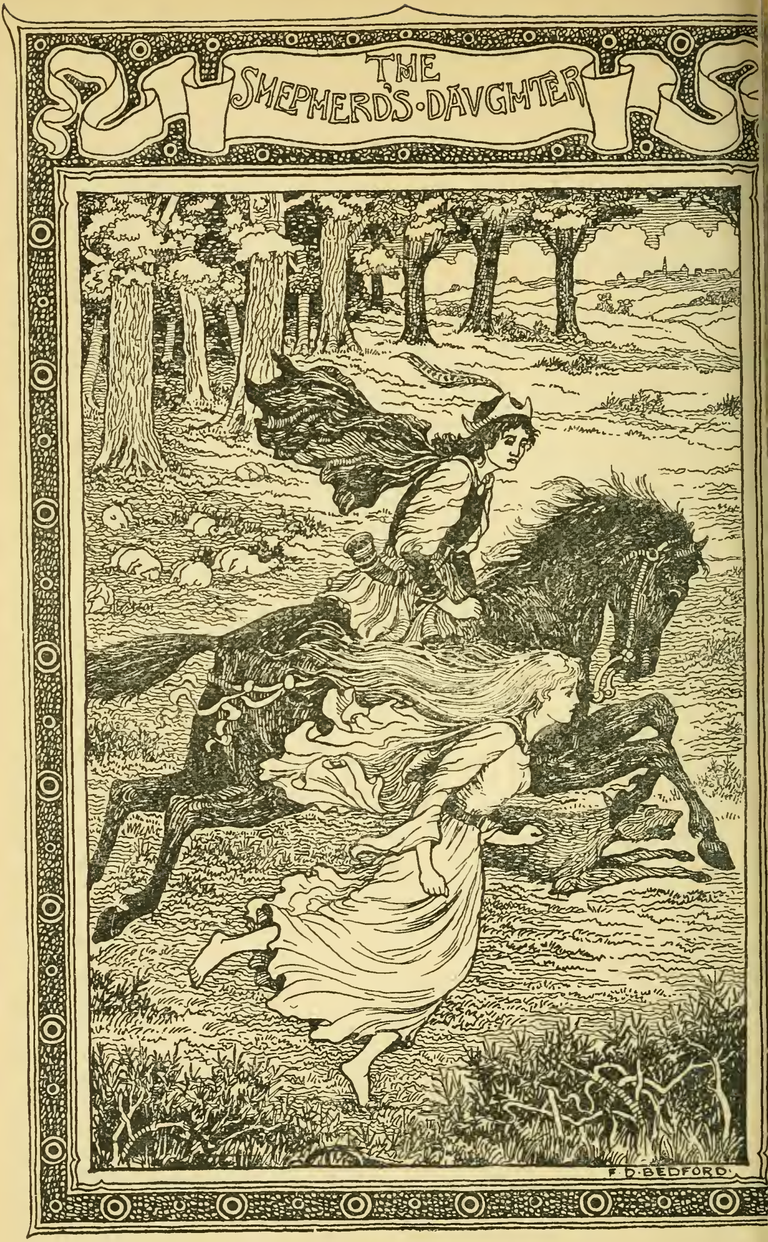
Now when he came to his mother, she was delighted and rejoiced beyond measure. She kissed and embraced him, she wept and laughed for joy.

The Reeve suffered his mother to give full rein to her feelings for some while, but when she paused for exhaustion, he made to her a profound bow, and, drawing Southernwood forward, said, " Madam, to this sweet and beautiful damsel I owe my escape from a most terrible fate. By her energy, by her courage, by her resolution, she succeeded in delivering me. I have resolved that she shall be my wife."

His mother seemed a little staggered and offended. Assuming a grave aspect, she said, " My dear son, gratitude is an admirable virtue, and eminently suitable in a Reeve of Lynn. But every virtue may be carried to an excess. You must remember this person, otherwise so admirable, occupies a menial position, and is in indigent circumstances."

" 'Position and circumstances be hanged!' which is an expression used in the first circles of Elfin Land," said the Reeve, with another bow. " My dearest lady mother, much as I respect your judgment, in this matter I shall be ruled by my own feelings. Whatever may have been the position and circumstances of this lovely maid, of whom I am passionately enamoured, and to whom I am attached by the most sacred obligations of gratitude, henceforth her circumstances shall be mine, or mine hers, and her position shall be that of mistress of my house, and reevedom, and person. And, dearest mother, inasmuch as hitherto you have been sore troubled, even to the silvering of your seven locks, by solicitude for the heart of your supposed son, now, to ensure to you and every one that your true son's heart *is in the right place*, I commit its custody to my dying day to sweet Southernwood."

NOTE.—The story of Southernwood is based, but based only, on the ballad of Tam Lin. We have this only in Scottish form, but Tommy o' Lynn is well known all over England and the subject of humorous songs. Moreover, the story of his capture by fairies and his release is common to all peoples. The maid and the gold ball I have worked in from another tale, to which it does not properly belong; the real story concerns the loss of the golden ball, and the sentence of the maid to execution unless it be produced. I have also worked in the universally known story of the fairy changeling, common in Ireland, in Scotland, in Wales, and in Cornwall. In folk-tales the same elements are worked up again and again, and this is my sole justification for the hotch-potch of a story, Southernwood. For Tam Lin see Child, *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, No. 39. For The Golden Ball, see appendix to Henderson's *Folklore of the Northern Counties*, ed. 1866, and Jacobs' *More English Fairy Tales*. I must admit that the bit of ballad, p. 91, is not a genuine old fragment.


THE SHEPHERD'S DAUGHTER
F. D. BEDFORD

V

THE SHEPHERD'S DAUGHTER

THERE was once a king of England, and he was very fond of hunting. He went out hunting in the forest one day, and he had taken with him a roast chicken to eat when hungry.

He had hunted all the morning without success, and by the middle of the day he was separated from all his attendants, and was hot and hungry and tired. Then he came out on a bit of furzy moor, and there he saw a green mound, and he sat upon it. He opened his wallet, and pulled out the chicken, and ate.

As he was very hungry, he not only ate the meat, but he picked the bones clean, and then threw the bones away. He threw them down impatiently, because he was very vexed that all his hunting had been in vain.

All at once a little woman stood before him with a stick in her hand, and she was brandishing this with vehemence, and her other hand was clenched, and she spluttered when she spoke, so angry was she. The little woman was no taller than the king's knee. He was much surprised, and asked her what made her angry.

She answered, screaming shrilly, "You have thrown your chicken bones against my children! you have lamed one, and broken the head of another, and all are bruised and crying."

Then the king thought he heard a little shrilling in the grass like crickets—but it was the crying of the old woman's children.

"This is my house," continued the old woman; "you are sitting on the roof, and throwing the bones at my children, who were playing in the grass, enjoying the sun out of doors. And now, because you have done this thing, your daughter shall be taken from you, that is just born to you in St. James's Palace, and shall be carried away, and you shall not see her again, till the day she is given in marriage, and she shall be brought up as a poor shepherd's daughter, and shall keep sheep upon the moor."

Then the little woman disappeared.

The king mounted on his horse, and sounded his horn, and presently his huntsmen came up. He told them what he had seen and heard, and they looked, and lo! the mound of green turf had sunk into the ground, and could not be seen at all. So all thought, though too polite to say so, that the king had been dreaming.

When, however, the king came home from hunting, he found St. James's Palace all in commotion. That very day a little daughter had been born to him, and no sooner was she born, than she had been spirited away.

The nurses and the chambermaids and the chamberlains looked everywhere for the babe,—in the cupboards, under the pillows, they turned up the chairs, they ransacked the drawers, they shook at the curtains, they beat the carpets, they turned out the dustbin, but nowhere could the newly-born princess be found; moreover, the royal squires rode about as fast as they could, round the palace, and through the parks, but they could not see anyone going away with the new-born baby.

It was very sad. And the saddest thing was that the king and queen knew, from what the little old woman had said, that the princess had been carried away into the country and given to some shepherd, and that she would be brought up as a country girl, and be married, they had no doubt, to some country bumpkin. But that was not all. They had no other child, and whoever married the little princess would become King of England.

"It would be very painful," said the queen, "if she were to marry a Giles Scroggins."

"It would be worse if his name were Buggins," said the king.

"I don't think the people would stand it," said the queen; "fancy on the coin of the realm *Buggins*, D.G., F.D."

"There would be a revolution," said the king.

"Then, again, his manners," said the queen.

"And his morals," said the king.

"We really know nothing of the manners and morals of the common people," observed the queen.

"That is true," responded the king, and became thoughtful.

"I have always had a great abhorrence of what is *common*," said the queen.

"Yet you say your devotions out of the Book of Common Prayer," retorted the king. The queen then changed the topic.

Now it must be told that the little princess was whisked away by the pixy who lived under the mound, and was dropped into the arms of a shepherd's wife who was shelling peas. This good woman was a little short of sight, and she really thought, as she shelled peas, that the babe had tumbled out of a pod. So she had her christened Sweet Pea, not because the pod out of which she came was other than that of the common pea, or that the peas among which she lay were other than common garden peas, that are boiled with mint; but because, though ordinary peas are sweet, this darling little baby was a thousand times sweeter.

The shepherd and his wife were very fond of her, and she grew up in their cottage, believing them to be her father and mother, and she learned to be thrifty and industrious and truthful and honest.

As they were very poor, she was obliged to work. In time the shepherd became old and feeble, and then Sweet Pea was sent out on the moors with the sheep.

Now it happened one day that the Duchess of Cornwall had gone with her ladies to a lake there is in Cornwall called Dozmaree, and they amused themselves with sailing in a boat on the rippling blue water. The duchess was knitting, and every now and then she put her knitting-pins into the water; she said she wondered how deep the lake was.

Then all at once there rose up beside the boat a man who was half a fish. He had long black hair hanging down, like seaweed, and a flat face, very pale, and large fishy eyes, and fins where men grow whiskers. He splashed the water over the duchess and her ladies, and they saw he had webbed hands. He was in a great rage, and could hardly speak. But at last he screamed out—

"Beneath the waters where you swim,
Sits my wife with babies three;
Why should you stick your knitting-pin,
Blind them that they cannot see?"

And he said, that when the duchess thrust down her knitting-pin into the water, she stuck it into the eyes of his children. She had blinded one in both eyes, and the second had lost the right eye, and the third had lost the left.

The duchess was so astonished and frightened that she could not speak.

Then the mere-man said, "Because you have done this, your son, that is just born, shall go clean contrary to what he wishes and ought to do. I cannot alter his heart, but I can make him go against all he would desire to do with his good heart."

Then he dropped under the waves, and they saw him no more, but they heard a sort of plaintive sound, such as is made by mussels and oysters when drawn by the waves over stones—but it was the wailing of the mere-babes because their eyes had been put out by the duchess's knitting-pins.

The unhappy duchess was too grieved and ashamed to tell her husband what had happened, but she thought much about the ill wish that the mere-man had laid on her beautiful little boy, who was called William, and who, because he was fairer and sweeter in appearance than any other William in Cornwall, was called Sweet William.

Nevertheless, in spite of his name, he grew up to be a sour and bitter William. He was very amiable in heart, but when he desired to kiss his nurse, then, instead, he slapped her; and when he wished to say "You dear" to anyone who was kind to him, he said instead, "You are a naughty old pig." This was very sad, and the Duke of Cornwall was much troubled. He could not understand it. Of a good tree comes good fruit, and he and the Duchess were so good, that it was a wonder to everyone in Cornwall that so cantankerous and uncourteous a boy should have been born to them.

The duchess wept, and became pale and worn. Then, one night she had a dream, and in that dream she saw the Fairy Morgana, who is the greatest of all the fairies in Cornwall, and wishes well to all Cornish people. The fairy said to her, "Fern-seed is good for blind eyes. Go, scatter fern-seed on the waters of Dozmaree, and see what comes of it."

Next day the duchess awoke, and remembered well what she had dreamed. So she went with her ladies over the moors and hills to the lake, and as she went, she plucked fern leaves and rubbed the seed into her hands, and filled a large reticule with it.

When she came to Dozmaree, she mounted the boat and rowed over the lake, and all the way with both hands she strewed fern-seed, and as she strewed she sang—

"The fern-seed right and left I strew,
Mere-man, for your babies three;
I grieve that I did wrong to you.
Fern-seed maketh eyes to see."

Then out of the water rose the mere-man, and he said, "Because you have done this thing, and restored sight to my babes' eyes, I take off my ill wish as much as I can. Your son shall be changed to be in manner what he is in heart, as soon as he is married. Marriage is sovereign to surly manners."

Then he went down under the water again, and they saw him no more.

Now the Duchess told her husband what she had done, told him the whole story; and they considered that William should be sent to the court at St. James's, to be there brought up where are the best of manners and morals. Moreover, there he would be sure to find some beautiful, amiable, accomplished and noble maiden, suitable to become his wife and future Duchess of Cornwall.

So William went to the court of the King of England. Now, before he came, the queen sighed, and she said to the king, "Oh, if only our dear daughter had not been whisked away from us—she would now be old enough to be married, and it would have been so nice to have married her to the heir of the Duchy of Cornwall—so much better than going hunting after foreigners. But it is all your doing."

"What is my doing?"

"Why, it is through your want of consideration in throwing chicken bones at the poor little pixies."

"I never saw them," said the king.

"Because you never look about you; you are so inconsiderate. It was all your doing."

"Well, I never!" said the king.

"It is of no use your saying 'Well, I never!' If you had looked before you threw chicken bones, as every wise and sensible and moral man ought to do, this would never have happened. As I said before, it is all your doing."

"I think you might have minded the cradle a little better," observed the king.

"How could I?" asked the queen indignantly. "And to think of your throwing chicken bones about when your blessed babe was born!"

Now when William, son of the Duke of Cornwall, arrived at the court, then everyone was struck with his beauty and gracefulness. And everyone exclaimed, "Surely this is Sweet William!"

But he had not been there many days before they found that in all he did he was ungracious and even unkind.

William was troubled at this; he knew that he wished well, and desired to do courteous things, but somehow he always said and did just the wrong thing, and made enemies where he ought to have made friends. Immediately after he had done a rude thing or said an unkind word, he was sensible of it, and laboured to undo what he had done amiss, and always made matters worse by the attempt.

Consequently, he had no friends, and he did not play games with the rest, nor walk nor ride with the rest; and it was very little likely that he would win the heart of any fair lady.

After he had been some time at the king's court, he returned home to see his father, who was dying, and he remained at home till the duke was dead. Then he determined to go back to the court and pay his respects, as Duke of Cornwall, to the king and queen. After that he would return to his duchy and attend to it; but he greatly feared that, however much he might wish to be a generous and good duke, he would only irritate and annoy the Cornish people.

He was riding alone, on his way back to London, when he passed over the moor on which Sweet Pea was tending her sheep.

Now I must tell you that this same day Sweet Pea was sitting on a green mound that rose out of the heather. She had taken with her for her food a hard-boiled egg. As she was hungry at noon, she pulled the egg out of her pocket and began to peel it. The shell she broke carefully, and put all the little pieces on a stone, one on top of another, and she had broken them so neatly that they were all round and of one shape. Then she took the fine skin that is inside the shell, and she stripped it carefully, and with a pair of scissors cut the fine skin into strips, and began to sew them together with a needle she had, and which she threaded with a fibre from a spider's cobweb, and she made out of the skin little shirts.

She heard a cackling laugh, and looked up. There stood before her a funny old woman, who looked smilingly on her, and said, "Little shepherd's daughter, will you give me the eggshell cups you have made? They will serve as porridge bowls for my children."

"With all my heart," said Sweet Pea; "and if you want more, I will bring another egg to-morrow and make more."

"You are very good," said the little woman; "and in payment I will bring you your husband this way—and his name is Sweet William."

Then the little woman looked at what the girl was doing, and said, "May I see what you have made?"

"By all means," said Sweet Pea, and she put the little doll suits into the old woman's hand. Then the pixy—for a pixy it was—danced and capered and screamed for joy. And when she ceased, she said, "Will you give me these for my little children?"

"Most gladly," answered Sweet Pea; "and if you want more, I will bring another egg to-morrow and make you as many more shirts and jackets as you like."

Then the pixy said, "Because you have done this, I will tell you who you really are. You are not a shepherd's daughter. You are the daughter of the King and Queen of England. And now—see—out of the forest comes riding the man who is to be your husband. Follow him, and do not tell him you are a princess."

Then the little woman disappeared, taking with her the eggshell porridge bowls and egg-skin shirts. Now, as William, Duke of Cornwall, came riding through the heather, his dog that he had ran after Sweet Pea's lambs and sheep and scattered them. Then William called to the dog. He wanted to call him off, but instead of shouting, "Lion—come back!" he called, "Lion—at them!"

So the dog pursued his sport, and he ran down one sheep, and then another, and killed all the flock of Sweet Pea. She wept and entreated, but it was all in vain—every one of her sheep and lambs was torn and dead. Then she went weepingly to the beautiful, princely-looking young man riding on his horse and told him that these sheep were all that her father and mother possessed, and that unless they were paid for the old people would perish from want.

He looked at her, and thought how lovely she was, and he wished to pay her for what damage his dog had done, but when he pulled out his purse, instead of giving it her, he struck her in the face with it.

Then she asked what was his name. She must have justice done. And so distressed and angry was she, that she forgot all that the pixy had said to her.

He answered—

"O some do call me Jack," he said,
  "And some do call me Jame,
But when I'm in the king's high court,
  Sweet William is my name."

Then he struck spurs into his horse and rode away, and the dog followed him. He was unhappy and wroth with what had happened, but it was like his ill luck: when he wished to do right, then he did wrong, and when he wished to say a civil word, then he said a rude one.

He took his horse all by the head,
  And swift away did ride;
She gathered up her skirts and ran
  Hard by his stirrup side.
And when she to a river came,
  She bared her breast and swam;
And when she was on the green grass,
  Then swift a-foot she ran.
He never was a courteous knight
  To bid her mount and ride.
And she was such a simple maid,
  She did by him abide.

Thus she ran on, and as she ran, her feet were wounded, and the blood flowed from them. But she heeded it not. She was resolved to have justice done for the sheep the dog had slain, for the sake of the poor old couple whose they were, and because they had been entrusted to her.

Now the darkness began to come on, and it would soon be night. Nevertheless she ran on, as says the ballad—

"Now stay, the night is falling fast,
  Full weary thou must be."
"I will not stay, by night or day,
  But run 'longside of thee."

As soon as ever they came to London gates, then the youth galloped hard away over the pavement, but she was so weary and so lame that she could only limp along. But she asked her way to the king's palace, and when she reached it, then she stood at the door and knocked and rang.

There was no servant in the hall
  Nor noble heard the din;
So down there came the king himself,
  And let the fair maid in.

Now the king was very much astonished when he saw a poor shepherd girl at the palace door, breathless with running, soiled with dust, and with blood flowing from her feet.

He was a courteous king, so he led her into the hall, and made her sit down, and then he asked her—

"What wouldst thou have of me?" he said;
  "O, what dost seek?" said he.
"Thou hast a man in thy fair court
  That hath a-robbed me."
"What hath he robbed thee of, fair maid?
  Of purple or of pall?
Or hath he ta'en the red gold ring
  From off thy finger small?"

Then the shepherd's daughter answered and said: "He has not taken from me purple or pall, for I have none of these things, but only brown linsey-woolsey gowns. And as for a gold ring, I never saw gold in my life, and very seldom any silver." Thereupon she told the king how the young knight had come riding up with his dog, and how the dog had worried her sheep, and the knight, instead of calling off the dog, had urged it on, and then how, when she had asked him to pay for all the sheep that had been killed, he had struck her across the face.

Now, when the king heard this story, you may be sure he was very angry, for not only was he a courteous king, but also he was just. But he had many knights and noble youths in his court, and he did not know which of all these was the guilty one. So he said—

"How dost thou know this noble knight?
  What dost thou know him by?"
"By his locks that are as yellow wheat,
  And by his bright blue eye."

The king answered in great wrath—

"Oh, if he be a married man,
  I'll hang him on a tree;
But if he be a bachelor,
  His body I'll give to thee."
The king he callèd up his men
  By one, by two, by three;
Sir William once was first of all,
  But now the last came he.
Then out he held full fifty pounds,
  All wrappèd in a glove.
"Fair maid, I'll give the same to thee.
  Go, seek another love."
"Oh, I want nothing of thy gold,
  Nor nothing of thy fee,
But I will have thy body whole
  Which the king hath granted me."

There was no help for it. The king had promised, and William was obliged to submit. He was very wroth, because he was Duke of Cornwall, and this was but a poor shepherd's daughter. A marriage was to be made, but not in London. The king said it should be in Cornwall, where all might see their new duchess wed. Then said the duke—

"Would I had drunk the water clear
  When I did drink the wine,
Rather than any shepherd's brat
  Should be a lady of mine!
Would I had drunk the puddle foul
  When I did drink good ale,
Rather than here that shepherd maid
  Should shame me with her tale!"

Then she answered him—

"A shepherd maiden though I was,
  You might have let me be;
I never had come to London town
  To ask for aught from thee.
A shepherd brat what if I was?
  You might have ridden by,
And never a word to you, fair knight,
  Had ever spoken I."
He set her on a milkwhite steed,
  Himself upon a grey,
And forth he rode with the shepherd maid
  From London town away.
The very first town they came unto,
  He bought her a golden ring,
The very next town they came unto,
  He made her a gay wedding.

Then up and spoke the shepherd maid: "Forasmuch as now I am your wife, and Duchess of Cornwall, I will tell you who I be. Think not that I am a poor shepherd's brat. I am better born than you. For you are a duke's son, and I am the daughter of the king and queen. Think not that I am poor as the shepherd with only his flock of sheep; I am the heiress of the crown of England. You have in this Cornish land great mines of tin, but I have all the golden treasure of great England.

> If you make me lady of one good town,
> I make you lord of three."

Then there was great rejoicings throughout the land when the tidings were known, that the only daughter of the king and queen was found, and was married to William, Duke of Cornwall. And now also was the Duchess of Cornwall glad, for her son's good heart shone forth in all he said and did. For, indeed, marriage is the sovereign cure for churlishness. And the king and queen of England laughed and cried for gladness, and made the fountains in London spout wine, and they threw buns, with many currants in them, out of their state carriage windows as they drove through the streets. Indeed, there was great rejoicing, such as cannot be described.

You must know that ever after, the eldest son of the King and Queen of England is entitled, not only Prince of Wales, but also Duke of Cornwall, for in the marriage of Sweet William and Sweet Pea, the realm of England was united to the ancient duchy of Cornwall, thenceforth to be "One and All."[1]

NOTE.—The story of the Shepherd's Daughter is based on a folk-tale combined with a folk-ballad. The ballad is very well known. It first appeared in print as "The Beautiful Shepherdesse of Arcadia," and was reprinted in the *Roxburghe Ballads*, *iii.* 160; it is very well known still among the peasantry of England, and is sung to a fine ancient melody. It is known well also in Scotland. A snatch of the ballad occurs in Beaumont and Fletcher's play, "The Knight of the Burning Pestle," that was printed in 1613. The story is perhaps derived from the older "Ballad of Sir Gawain's Marriage." See concerning it Professor Child's *English and Scottish Ballads,* the new edition, No. 110. The folk-tale I have combined with it is one I remember being told as a child.

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[1] "One and All" is the motto of the duchy of Cornwall.

In Roger of Wendover's *Flowers of History,* written in 1235, is the story of King Edward, son of Alfred the Great, and the Shepherd's Daughter. Their son was the famous King Athelstan, who succeeded Edward in 924. It is possible that the ballad may have been based on this story.

In the "Marriage of Sir Gawain," in Percy's *Reliques,* the damsel is bewitched and made hideous. In the folk-tale she is also subject to enchantment. In the ballad, as we have it, all the earlier part of the story, telling how it was that she, a queen's daughter, came to be living as a shepherdess, is lost. We have, in fact, only the second half of the ballad preserved to us.

For particular reasons I have been obliged to alter the first incident in the ballad.

VI

THE TURKEY FACTOR

VI

THE TURKEY FACTOR

THERE was a certain factor who went into the East and did business for merchants in London. Although a young man, he was so honest and intelligent, that the merchants felt confident in placing their affairs in his hands.

By his honesty and steadiness he had amassed a little fortune of five hundred and fifty pounds, and he thought that when he had six hundred, he would set up business for himself, become himself a merchant, and he was confident that in a few years he would grow to be very rich. He came to Turkey on his business.

Now one day he saw a man carried to burial, and there came some Turks and arrested the body, for they said that the man had died in debt fifty pounds, and unless the money were paid, his carcase would be cast to the dogs to devour. The widow and orphans of the deceased wept and entreated, but the Turks insisted that it should be so.

Then the factor was moved with pity, and he paid the man's debt of fifty pounds out of his own pocket, and gave orders that the funeral should be proceeded with. The widow and children wept tears of joy now, and called down blessings on his head.

Another day, as the factor was walking near the sea, he heard a voice crying, and when he hastened to the spot, saw a beautiful girl, and the Turkish soldiers were going to strangle her and throw her into the sea.

The factor asked what she had done.

Then he learned that she had been a slave in the sultan's seraglio, and had waited on the sultana; and that one day she had let fall and broken a precious crystal phial filled with otto of roses, and that as this was greatly esteemed by the sultana, she was very angry, and had ordered the slave girl to be strangled and thrown into the Bosphorus.

The factor asked what was the value of the crystal phial with the precious scent, and was told that it was worth five hundred pounds. They further told him that if the sum were forthcoming, the sultana would be content to let the girl live.

Five hundred pounds was a large sum. Indeed it was all that remained of the factor's savings. He debated in his mind a moment. Then the girl threw herself on her knees before him, and, wringing her hands and weeping, implored him to save her.

So the factor, who was a tender-hearted man, paid the five hundred pounds, and took the girl to his ship, and said that he would convey her to England, where there would be no such chance befall her again.

After he had finished his business in Constantinople, and had sold well the wares he had been commissioned to sell by the merchants in London, and had laden the vessel with such wares as were to be had in the East, silks and gold brocades, and Damascus swords, and spices and sugar-cane, he sailed back to England, and in the ship with him was the maiden whom he had rescued from death.

His masters were very much pleased with what he had done. He had disposed of their goods to immense advantage, and he had brought back precisely those articles which were then in great request, for the King of England was going to marry his son to a princess, and there were to be immense rejoicings and banquetings in London. Thus all the silks and brocades were bought up at a great price, and all the spices and sweet stuffs sold at once.

The merchants made their factor a very handsome present for his services.

Now it must be told that when he arrived in England, he gave the maiden to his sister, who kept house for him, and she became the servant to his sister and to him. She was very gentle and amiable, and very grateful to the factor for having saved her from a terrible death.

Very soon the merchants commissioned the factor to go again to the East. This time he was not to go to Constantinople, but to China.

Accordingly, he made ready to depart.

Now, before he started, the captive maiden came to him and brought him a beautiful silk waistcoat, embroidered with flowers of various colours and a gold dragon swallowing a silver moon.

She said to him, "My dear master, I shall never forget what I owe to you. Now, I desire that you would accept from me this waistcoat that I have worked for you, and promise me that when you appear before the Emperor of China, you will put on this garment."

He thanked her for her attention in working this waistcoat for him; he admired greatly her taste, and he assured her he would not fail to do that which she desired.

Then he started on his voyage, which was a very long one, and lasted many months.

At last he reached China, and when the emperor heard that an English merchant-ship had arrived, he gave orders that the factor should come to the palace at Pekin and produce the best of his goods, that he might see them, and buy those which pleased him.

The factor remembered his promise, and he drew on the richly-embroidered waistcoat, and went to the palace, his servants carrying bales of English goods after him. He saluted the emperor with great respect, and proceeded to show him the produce of English looms. But presently he saw that the Chinese sovereign was not looking at them, but had his eyes intently fixed upon his waistcoat.

Then the emperor said, "Sir, you will do me a favour if you will tell me where you got that garment. I assure you that it greatly surprises me to see you in it, with such remarkable flowers embroidered on it in such a singular manner, and with the device of a gold dragon swallowing a silver moon."

The factor replied that the waistcoat had been embroidered for him by the hands of a servant girl in England.

Then he proceeded to narrate to the emperor the story of this girl: how she had been a slave in the palace of the sultana, how she had broken a crystal phial of otto of roses, how she had been condemned to death, and how he had rescued her by paying five hundred pounds.

The emperor was greatly moved. He said, "Know, Englishman, that this captive girl is my daughter. She, and she only, knows all the various stitches that go to make embroidery of flowers such as are on your waistcoat; and no one in all China is suffered to fashion a gold dragon swallowing a silver moon unless he or she be of the blood-royal. One day, when my daughter was cruising about on the Yellow Sea with her maidens for pleasure, as the weather was extremely hot, and she had been unwell, and her mother and I thought sea air would do her good, it so happened that Malay pirates took the vessel, carried off all on board, and the empress and I never heard what became of our daughter. In the palace yard is a well, and it is nearly full of the tears we have shed for her loss. A great sage who read the stars assured us we should hear of her by the time the well was full. Yesterday her Imperial Highness came to me and said that another night of weeping would make the well overflow.

Now," continued the emperor, "I shall richly reward you in the present, but I desire you to return and bring me my daughter, when I will give her to you, or any man who returns her to me, together with five hundred thousand pounds, and make of him, if he desire it, a mandarin of five tails."

The factor was both surprised and glad, and he promised the emperor that he would hasten back to London, and would speedily return and bring the princess with him.

The emperor, without more ado, bought the entire contents of the merchant ship, and paid double for everything. He, moreover, gave a rich reward to the factor. He also sent a mandarin to the top of a tower, and he was to count the hours till he saw the sail of the returning vessel, and every hour he was to pull away a tile from the roof and throw it down. When no tile fell, then the emperor would know that the ship containing his beloved daughter was in sight.

Not to make a long story, it must be told that no adventure befell the factor as he returned. The captain of the ship had heard all that had been said, and the promises that had been made.

When the factor arrived in England he at once hasted home to his sister's house, and rejoiced the heart of the poor damsel with the news that he had seen her father and mother, and that they were impatient to receive her in their arms.

Then he went to the merchants and paid them the double sum for all their goods which he had received of the emperor, and they were only too pleased when he said that it was his desire to return at once to China, where he hoped to be as successful with their merchandise the second time as the first.

Now costly robes were purchased for the princess, and she was no longer treated as a servant. She was by no means elevated by pride, but was sweet and gentle and modest as before.

After a delay only sufficient to allow of the unlading of the vessel and its relading, the factor made ready for sea again, and the same captain commanded in the ship as before.

The princess was taken on board and was treated with the utmost respect. She had embroidered with her own hands a golden dragon swallowing a silver moon on a broad strip of dark blue silk, and this was to serve as pennon at the masthead.

Now the captain of the vessel was an ambitious and an avaricious man. He recalled what were the terms of the promise made by the Emperor of China, that he would give his daughter in marriage, together with five hundred thousand pounds, to the factor, or to any other who should restore his daughter to him. He resolved to make away with the factor on the voyage, so as to obtain the reward for himself.

Accordingly, one night, when the factor was asleep on deck, the captain threw him overboard, and sailed on without him, and reached China in safety.

The poor princess was full of tears and sadness of heart at the disappearance of the good factor The captain said that he believed he had fallen overboard accidentally.

Now, when the ship arrived at Pekin, and the mandarin on the tower top ceased to throw down tiles, the emperor ran with all his court down to the beach to receive his daughter.

He was rejoiced to see and kiss her; and was sorry to hear of the loss of the factor, but gave less heed to this in the exuberance of his joy at the discovery of his beloved child.

As he had undertaken to marry her to the man who brought her to China, he bade his daughter prepare to become the wife of the captain.

She was much shocked, and weepingly entreated her father not to enforce this, but he said that he had made the promise and must observe it.

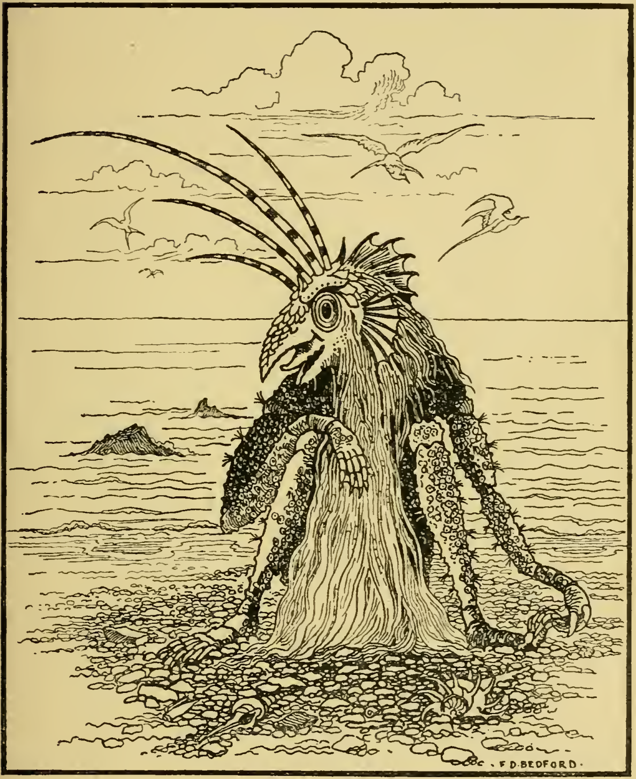
Then she entreated that she might be allowed three weeks in which to mourn for her lost friend and benefactor, and to this he consented.

The story turns back to the factor, who had been thrown into the sea. Fortunately, he was a skilful swimmer, and there was an island at no great distance. By great exertion he managed to reach it; he crept up the beach, cast himself under a palm tree, and was so exhausted that for some time he could not move.

When day dawned, he rose from where he was lying, and proceeded to examine the island. There were many fruit trees on it, and there were many shell-fish to be had on the rocks, so that he was in no fear of starvation; but his mind was in sore trouble because of the princess, who he knew would fall a prey to a wicked schemer.

But he knew neither how to assist her, nor how to liberate himself from the island.

One day he saw a curious old grey man crawling about on the shore. He had very long thin legs and arms and a fat grey body, and he usually walked



on the tips of his toes and the ends of his fingers, and his beard swept the ground. He walked like this on all fours because he was in search of delicate sand-worms and skipping sand-fleas, which were great dainties to him. He was, in fact, the Old Man of the Sea.

When he came up to the factor, he stood upright, and then the factor saw that he had got fish-scales down the side of his nose.

He had great saucer eyes, without any colour, or light, or expression in them.

He asked the factor who he was, and how he came there.

The factor at once informed him, and asked the Old Man of the Sea whether there were any means of leaving the island, whether he had a canoe, or whether any vessels touched there.

The old man answered that he needed no canoe himself, he was as well, if not better, under water than on land. And as for foreign vessels coming to that coast, he was glad to say none did, or they would spoil his hunting ground.

He seemed much annoyed at any human being taking up his abode on the island, and he said so. The factor replied that none could desire to be away from it more than himself, and that if the Old Man of the Sea could show him how to leave, he would at once depart.

The old man considered a moment, and then said, "There is but one means of your leaving here. You must get on my shoulders and let me swim with you."

"I will do that," answered the factor, "if you will convey me to some point whence I can make my way to the court of the Empress of China."

The Old Man of the Sea began to rub the scales on his nose, and after a little consideration, he said, "I will do that, but only if you will promise me your first son after you are married to the princess of China."

The factor thought within himself, Now that she is a princess, I am quite sure she will not willingly consent to marry me, and I will release her from doing so, if I get to Pekin. So he said aloud, "Very well, old man, I agree to your terms."

"Then," said the Old Man of the Sea, "get on my back."

At once he went down on all fours, and the factor jumped and was on his back in a minute. The old man ran like a crab sideways to the water's edge and went in, and then began to swim, working his legs and arms like a crab.

The distance to the mainland was not so great as might have been supposed, or else the old man swam very fast.

The factor was brought ashore, and to his surprise found himself landed in China.

As the old man shook him off his back, he lifted himself up, and, rubbing the scales on his nose, said, "Do not forget your promise. When you have your first-born son, I will come and demand him."

The factor went on through the land, and it was speedily noised abroad that he had escaped from drowning, and was coming to claim the princess and the reward promised with her.

When the captain heard this, he was filled with fear; he thought that his treachery would be revealed, and the emperor would put him to a cruel death.

So he hasted down to the ship. There was a plank between the quay and the deck, and he went hastily on to this plank. But he was in such agitation that his feet slipped and he fell over into the sea.

He might, no doubt, have been saved, had it not been that the Old Man of the Sea, after having deposited the factor on the shore, was swimming about under water to see whether there was any refuse cast out from the ships which he might eat himself, or take home to his little ones. And just when the captain fell from the plank, then the Old Man of the Sea came up out of deep water to the surface, and threw his long legs and arms round him and carried him down into the depths.

The sailors and those on shore thought that the captain had been seized by a monstrous water-spider or grey crab. He was never seen again, nor is it known what the Old Man of the Sea did with him, though it is held that he and his little ones ate and enjoyed him. There is positively no accounting for tastes.

When the factor came to the palace, the princess wept for joy. He told her that he would not hold her bound by her father's promise. He was but a poor man, and she an illustrious princess. She answered him:—

"Sir, were you a beggar, I'd still be your wife,
Because when just dying you saved my life."

So the marriage was prepared with great splendour and with great joy.

A twelvemonth passed in great happiness, and the factor loved his wife very dearly, and the emperor and empress were very fond of him.

At last, one day, the princess presented him with a little son.

The factor was overwhelmed with alarm and concern. He remembered the promise he had made, and he gave orders to the guards to watch every road, and on no account to allow any one to approach the palace without his consent.

That night he heard a scratching sound against the wall, and, looking at the window, saw the Old Man of the Sea entering. He had crawled up like a spider.

The old man stood up on his legs for a moment when he entered the room, and said, "I have come for your son, according to agreement."

The factor was for some moments too concerned to speak. At last he mustered up courage to say, "Give me till to-morrow, that I may break the news to my wife. I have not yet told her about the promise."

The old man rubbed the scales on his nose, and considered, then said, "Very well, till this time to-morrow. I have eaten rather freely to-day, and am not indisposed to postpone the consumption of the babe till I have digested my present dinner."

Then he rubbed his nose again, and went out of the window on all fours, and down the wall again.

How he came from the sea, how he had passed the guards unobserved, the factor never learned.

The father was in inexpressible distress. He was afraid to tell his dear wife that she must part with the babe, that was already the light of her eyes and the treasure of her heart.

He sat up late in great distress of mind. Then, all at once, he felt a chill come over him, and he shivered. Looking up, he saw a shadowy form. This figure addressed him, and said, "I am the ghost of the man to whom you gave a tomb. You spent fifty pounds to obtain for me decent burial. I have not forgotten the obligation. Now I will show you how to obtain delivery from the Old Man of the Sea. You observe how, whilst speaking, he rubs his nose. That is because of the scales on it. If those scales were off, he could not breathe on dry land. When he appears again, then rub up his nose the wrong way, and all the scales will be rubbed off. He will lose his power, and gasp like a fish out of water. Catch him by the scruff of his neck and throw him into the Well of Imperial Tears. There he will swim and dive till the end of time, or till the tears dry up, and never be able again to regain the sea. Henceforth, when you look on your little son, remember that the dead as well as the living can be grateful."

Thereupon the ghost vanished.

Next evening, when the Old Man of the Sea came scrambling into the room through the window, the factor at once sprang at him and rubbed his nose upwards; whereupon a number of silvery scales flew off and fell on the floor. The old man staggered back, and gasped, and could not speak. His power was gone from him. The factor seized him by the scruff of his neck and carried him, kicking and writhing, to the courtyard, and threw him into the well that had been filled with the tears of the emperor and the empress, when they wept for their lost daughter.

Whether he be still there, whether the well be dried up—these are matters I cannot say, as I have never been at Pekin. Ask those who have.

NOTE.—This is the story on which the old English ballad of "The Turkey Factor" runs. I have somewhat altered the conclusion, as the final portion of the ballad is rather inexplicable. The Tale of the Thankful Dead is very widely spread. A very similar story is found in Wolf's *Deutsche Hausmärchen*. 1851, p. 243. A variant in the *Zeitschrift für deutsche Mythologie*, 1855, from the Odenwald (ii. 374), where the merchant is English. Another in Meier's *Deutsche Volksmärchen aus Schwaben*, 1852 (No. 42), where also the merchant is English. A version in Strapparola's *Notti piacevoli*, Venice, 1573. It is singular that in the German versions, as in the English, the end should be similar. It is properly this :—

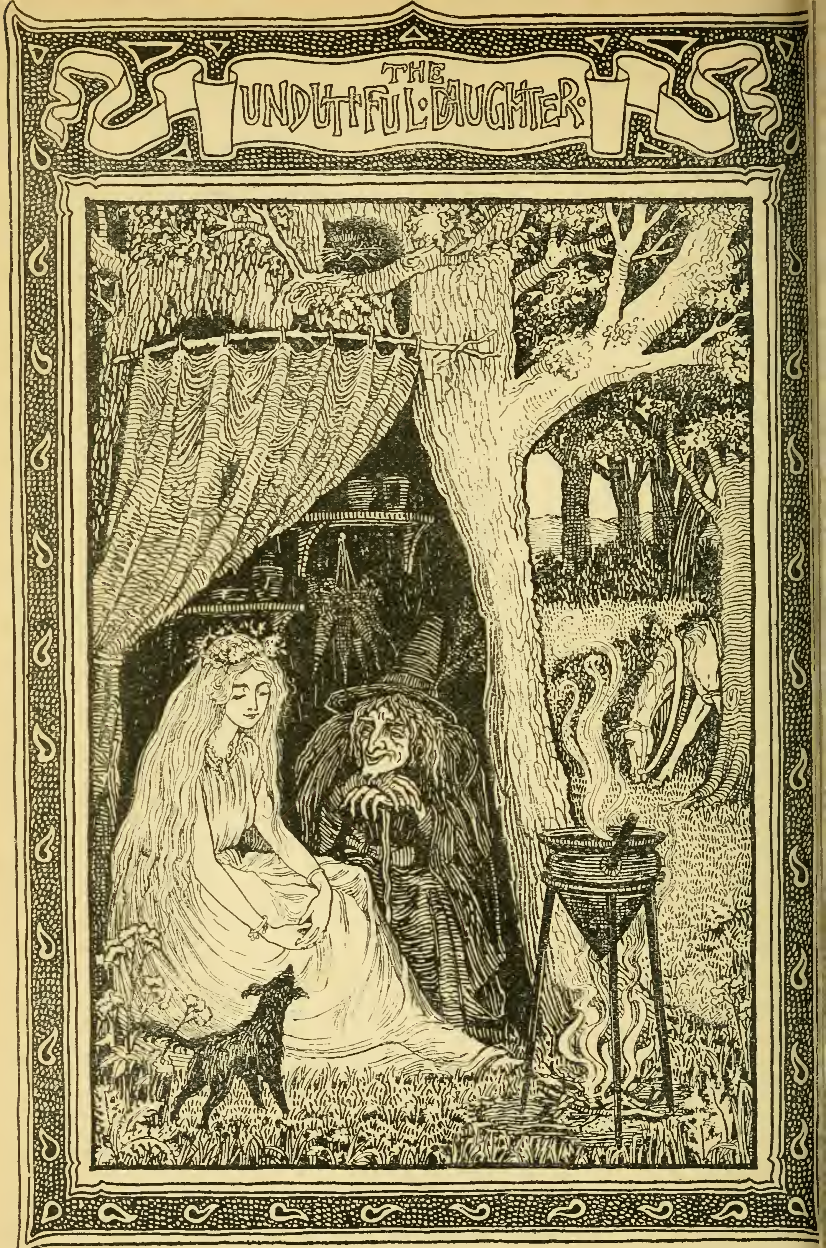
The merchant or factor, when cast on the desert island, is assisted by a mysterious grey man (in one form a black man), who brings him to the mainland on condition that he is given the firstborn. At the covenanted time he comes for the babe, and the factor yields it up, to receive it back again, and then the black or grey man reveals the fact that he is the ghost of the dead. K. Simrock, *Der gute Gerhardt*, conjectures that this is a corrupt form of an old pagan myth, that Odin or Wuotan is the grey man, who rewards the merchant for having been merciful to the dead, and that the offering of the child is a relic of human sacrifice. This is extremely probable, the original significance having been lost, and by this means the later part of the story got into confusion.

The English ballad which I have used is not older than the middle of last century; it is in "white letter," and is very rudely versified, without a particle of poetic value. It was printed in Bow Churchyard, and begins—

> Behold, here's a ditty, 'tis true and no jest,
> Concerning a young gentleman in the East.

It was also printed by J. Evans, 41 Long Lane. It is found in the Roxburghe Coll. iii. 869; in the Douce Coll., iv. 28, is one of J. Potts's, probably a little later. "The Turkey Factor's Garland," Liverpool, 1794, is a reprint. The earliest dated copy is "The Factor's Garland," to the tune of "The Wandering Lady," in J. Roberts' *Collection of Old Ballads*, vol. iii. p. 221; this is 1725, and as this was an old ballad then, it probably dates from the reign of James I.

There are several editions of the ballad in broadside and garland.


THE UNDUTIFUL·DAUGHTER·

VII

THE UNDUTIFUL DAUGHTER

THERE was a beautiful damsel who lived with her father and mother in a seaside place. They had a fine house and garden, and many servants.

This damsel was so vain that she cared for nothing but to look at her face in a glass.

Now, before her birthday, her father said to her, "Tell me what you most desire in all the world, and if possible, it shall be yours."

So she said, "Give me a room, all the walls of which are lined with mirrors, so that in it, wherever I look, I shall see myself."

He was sorrowful when he heard this, and he said to her, "My dear child, unless you think and care for something else except your own self, and your own beauty, I do not think that much good will attend you."

But she was headstrong and vain, and nothing would satisfy her but to have her looking-glass chamber. She answered her father and said, What is there more beautiful to be seen than my face?"

He rejoined, "Surely there are sweet flowers, the rose and the lily, and the daffadowndilly."

"The rose," said she, "has thorns, the lily has no colour, and the daffadowndilly has no scent. I am more beautiful than all these flowers—I have no teasing thorns, I have blooming pink cheeks, and my breath is sweeter than the new-mown hay."

"Then," rejoined her father, "there are beauteous birds, the peacock and the nightingale."

"The peacock," she said, "has a hideous voice, and the nightingale has voice and no comeliness. Therefore I am better than they. I dress more gorgeously than the peacock, and I have the voice of a nightingale."

"Then," rejoined he, "consider the butterfly and the bee."

"The butterfly," she said, "has no honey, and the bee has a sting. I am better than they. I am joyous and bright as the butterfly, and I have store of gold and jewels and riches, treasure richer than the honey in the hive of the bee."

When her father heard her thus speak, he saw that her mind was fully eaten up with vanity. But as he had promised to give her what she desired, he was obliged to let her have the room lined with mirrors.

Therein the beautiful damsel was happy. She twirled and skipped, and looked at herself from every side, and in every posture, and was quite satisfied that never had there been anyone more beautiful than she, and that there was nothing else worth seeing except herself.

So time passed, and a new birthday drew near.

Then her father said to her, "Tell me what you wish, and I will give it you."

She answered, "I wish to consult the Old Woman of Norwood as to whom I shall marry."

Her father rejoined, "That is not a wise thing to desire. When it pleases Heaven, the right man will come, one whom I and your mother will approve of, and you will love; and if he is a man of honour, and character, and family, then the marriage shall take place. You are our only child and our heir, and we do not intend you to be thrown away on anyone."

"Thrown away on anyone!" exclaimed the maiden. "I am not one who will allow of that. I am quite sure I will not marry anyone under a king."

"A king!" exclaimed her father. "You aim very high. I do not know where you will find one. Our king in England has a good queen—God grant him and her a long life!"

"I did not say that I would marry an English king. There are other kings, and one may come to me from over the sea. I will hear what the Old Woman of Norwood says to me."

"The Norwood gipsy may put strange fancies into your head. She can do you no good," said her father.

Nevertheless, as he had made the promise to let her have on her birthday what she asked, he was obliged to consent.

So she mounted her milkwhite horse, and she had bells of silver hung to the bridle, that they might tinkle, and cause people along the way to run out of their houses and look at her, the most beautiful damsel in all England.

When she reached Norwood, she found an old woman who lived in a hollow oak tree. A dog lay at her feet, a black cat sat on a branch above her head, and at the top of the tree was perched a raven, and above the tree-top hummed a gnat. Then she put a purse of gold into the old woman's hand, and said to her, "Tell me whom I shall marry, and what shall become of me."

Then the old woman said, "Little dog, little dog! what do you say?"

The dog stood up and barked, "Wow-wow-wow."

"Did you hear what my dog said?" asked the Old Woman of Norwood.

"I heard him say 'Wow-wow,' nothing more."

"He said in Dog-Latin, that you would marry a king."

"I knew it would be so," retorted the girl. "Tell me something more?"

"Little cat, little cat! what do you say?" called the gipsy woman.

Then the black pussy stood up on the branch, stretched itself, and said, "Mi-aw, mi-aw, mi-aw."

"Did you hear what the cat said?" asked the witch.

"I heard him say 'Mi-aw,' nothing more."

"He said in Cat-Greek, that you would sleep in a golden bed."

"Of course I shall, if I marry a king. Tell me something more."

"Little crow, little crow! what do you say?" screamed the old hag.

Then the raven flapped his wings, and answered, "Caw-caw-caw."

"Did you hear what the raven said?" asked the gipsy.

"I heard him say 'Caw,' nothing more."

"He said in Crow-Indian, that you would be attended by servants dressed in blue, who would rock you in your golden bed."

"That is nothing wonderful," said the maiden. "Tell me something further."

"Little gnat, little gnat! what do you say?" screamed the old woman.

Then the mosquito that was humming and fluttering above the tree-top, dropped within hearing of the girl's ear, and with a shrill pipe cried, "Pe-heep."

"Did you hear what the gnat said?" asked the witch.

"I heard him give a shrill little cry, like 'Pe-heep!'"

"That was Midge-Chinese. He said you would sleep under curtains of living green."

Well! the damsel was well pleased with what she had heard, but she wanted to know more.

The witch said, "I have no more creatures whom I can ask, except only a worm that burrows in the ground, and he cannot speak."

"Then what good is he?"

"He can crawl on a slate and write a message," answered the witch.

"Then summon the worm," ordered the girl.

The old hag took a piece of crooked iron, and scratched on the soil, and presently drew out a long red worm. This she placed on a bit of slate, and it began to crawl.

When it had crawled over the surface, the witch said—

"Do you see what he has written?"

"I see only some slimy wet marks."

"That is his writing, and he writes to say, that you will be carried away from home in a coach drawn by a thousand white horses, shaking their white manes."

"That will be a grand wedding," said the girl.

Then she returned home. And if she was a proud woman when she went forth to consult the Old Woman of Norwood, she was a prouder woman when she came home.

She went into her room lined with looking-glasses, and said, "I shall marry a king."

"Who told you that?" asked her mother.

"It was said by the dog when he uttered 'Wow-wow.'"

"I would not believe the bark of a dog," said her mother.

"And I shall sleep in a golden bed," continued the girl.

"Who said that?" asked her mother.

"That was said by the cat when he said 'Mi-aw.'"

"I would not put faith in the mi-aw of a cat," said her mother.

"And I shall be rocked to sleep by attendants dressed in gowns of blue," said the girl.

"Who said that?" asked her mother.

"That was told by the raven when he said 'Caw.'"

"If I were you, I would laugh at the caw of a crow," said her mother.

"And I shall have waving curtains of living green above me," continued the vain girl.

"Who told you that?" asked her mother.

"That was what the midge said that fluttered in the air."

"And what does a midge know about the future?" asked her mother.

"And I am to ride in a coach drawn by a thousand milkwhite horses," said the girl.

"Who put that nonsense into your head?" asked her mother.

"That was written by an earthworm on a bit of slate."

"And pray, who taught the worm to write?" asked her mother. "I can see farther off than can those stupid creatures, and I see that your vanity and folly will bring you to a bad end."

But the girl would give no heed to what her mother said. She believed the earthworm, but not her own mother.

Now drew near this damsel's birthday, when she would be eighteen. And one night she had a dream, and in that dream she saw the Old Woman of Norwood, who said to her, "I have appeared to tell you something. There is a feather on the tail of the gnat that flies above my oak tree, and the feather told the gnat, and the gnat told the raven, and the raven told the cat, and the cat told the dog, and the dog told the earthworm, and the earthworm scribbled the message on a bit of an old crock, that you were to marry on your eighteenth birthday the promised king. You must say nothing to your father or mother. He is now in the harbour with his ship, and the sign of the ship is The Golden Apple. Ask your father to let you go down to see over the barque, The Golden Apple, and the captain is he who will be your husband. I have sent a hedge-priest to the town, and he will marry you on board ship. But mind this—if you say a word to your father or mother about this, all will fall through that has been promised you. I have appeared in dream to the sea-captain, and he will expect you. The priest you will see standing by the capstan. He has been unfrocked by the bishop, but what of that? A priest is always a priest."

The girl's father came to her and said, "To-morrow is your birthday: ask what you wish, and I will do it for you."

Then she said, "There is a ship come lately into harbour, called The Golden Apple. I greatly desire to go over her."

Her father shook his head, and said, "This is a very unwise request. I hear no good account of this vessel. Some say it is that of a notorious pirate; but, indeed, no one really knows any certainty about her, nor who her captain is; but some assert that the crew is made up of runagates, and has on board a hedge-priest lately unfrocked by his bishop for grave misconduct."

However, as he had promised to let her have her way, he was obliged to grant her request.

Accordingly, on the morrow morning, she and her father and mother went to the ship, and the captain received them very graciously, and invited them to go all over the vessel.

By the capstan was a man, all shaven and shorn, but with a hang-dog look, and the fair maid was sure this was the priest of whom the Old Woman of Norwood had spoken.

The captain invited them down into his cabin, and then all at once he whistled, and his sailors sprang on the father and mother, and bound their hands, and put something over their mouths that they could not cry out, and forthwith the sea-captain gave his hand to the damsel, and led her up the companion ladder on deck, and the hedge-priest hastily married them over the capstan.

After that, the sea-captain said, "Make haste, go home and bring all the gold and silver and jewels in the house. I will not let your parents go till that is done.

Oh, take of your father his gold and his treasure,
Oh, take of your mother her fee without measure."

"But," said she, "is it true that you are a king?"

"Yes," he answered; "call any of my men and ask them."

Then she summoned a little cabin-boy, and said, "Answer me truly—who is your master?"

He said at once, "He is a king."

Then she was satisfied that she had the right husband.

But she asked further, "Shall I be driven away in a carriage drawn by a thousand white horses?"

He answered, "Yes; call up any of my men, and ask them."

So she summoned the mate, and said, "Is it so, that if I go with your master, I shall be carried away in a coach drawn by a thousand white horses?"

He answered, "Nay, you say too few. There will be ten thousand white horses shaking their milkwhite manes."

Then she was content.

She hasted on shore, and she filled baskets with all the jewels and gold she could find, the silver plate, the necklaces and chains of her mother, rings and goblets, and everything of value she could lay her hands on, and she made all her servants carry them down to the harbour, and they were taken on board by the sea-captain and his men.

Then he said, "Is all here?"

She said, "All but one gold bodkin with which my mother does her netting, and one silver spoon with which my father eats an egg."

He said, "Go and fetch them."

So she went back and brought the gold bodkin and the silver spoon, and then nothing was left in the house but pewter dishes and maplewood bowls, and a wooden spoon.

Now, when she had thus cleared her home, then the captain released her father and mother, and at once spread sail, and as there was a fine wind off shore, the sail filled, and the ship flew away to sea like a gull.

Then said the damsel, "But where is the coach?" and where are the white horses?"

The captain laughed and answered, "This ship is the coach, and the waves shaking their white manes are the horses."

"But," said she, "you are a king. Where is your kingdom?"

"My kingdom is this ship," he answered, "and my name is Andrew King. Therefore it is true that you have wed A. King."

Then she saw that she had been deceived, and she cried out—

"O captain! O captain! here's fifty gold crowns.
I pray thee, I pray thee to turn the ship round.
O captain! O captain, here's fifty gold pounds,
If thou wilt but set me again on the ground."

But he would not hear of it.

Now before very long she found that her husband, the sea-captain, was indeed a great pirate, and robbed ships on the sea.

And when she had sailèd to-day and to-morrow,
She was wringing her hands, and bewailing in sorrow.
And when she had sailèd not many a mile,
She knew she had been an undutiful child.

Now after a while a strange thing happened.

Although the sails were full spread, and the wind blew free, yet the vessel made no way in the sea. And this was the reason, I suppose. The father and the mother of the damsel had been so filled with grief that they had been plundered and deserted by their own daughter, whom they had loved so dearly, and had treated with such indulgence, that both died of a broken heart, and neither blessed the daughter before death closed their eyes and paralysed their tongues. And it is said that no ship will sail with one on board who has been the death of father and mother, and unforgiven by them.

And when she had sailèd to-day and to-morrow,
She was wringing her hands, and bewailing in sorrow.
And when she had sailèd, the days were not many,
The sails were outspread, but of miles made not any.

Then the sailors saw they were in evil plight, and that there was something which prevented their getting forward with the ship. It is told that there is a little shell-fish, like a limpet, called the remora, and that when it attaches itself to the keel, it arrests a vessel in full sail.

The sailors dived and examined the ship's keel, and no remora was there. So they knew that the fault must be on board, and they resolved to draw lots, and discover who it was who held the ship fast in mid-seas.

They cast the black bullets as they sailed on the water,
The black bullet fell on the undutiful daughter.
"Oh, who in the ship must go over the side?"
Oh, none save the maiden, the fair captain's bride.

When the damsel learned that the lot had fallen on her, and she was to be cast overboard, and that unless she were drowned, the ship could not move on her way, then she said, weeping—

"Oh, get me a boat that is narrow and thin
And set me, undutiful daughter, therein."

But they refused. They wanted the boat for themselves, and could not spare it for her. Then she said—

"Oh, take a white napkin, about my head bind it.
Oh, take a white napkin, about my feet wind it,
Alack that I must in the deep salten water,
Alack! I must sink, an undutiful daughter."

To this they agreed. They bound a white kerchief about her head, and they wrapped a sheet about her feet.

They took a white napkin, about her head bound it,
They took a white napkin, about her feet wound it,
They cast the fair pretty maid over, and she
Did sink out of sight in cruel salt sea.

Then at once the beak of the vessel began to cut the waves, they foamed about her sides, and she sped along her course like a gull. That night there was no cloud in the sky, an east wind was blowing, and the moon was full. Then the man at the wheel saw something in the water:—

The moon it was shining, the tide it was flowing,
Oh, what in the wake of the vessel was swimming?
"Oh, see, boys! oh, see! how she floats in the water!
Oh, see, boys! oh, see! the undutiful daughter."

At the cry of the man at the helm all the crew ran on deck, and with them the captain, and they could see the dead woman following the ship.

Then the sea-captain spoke, standing in the bows—

"Why swim in the moonlight, upon the sea swaying?
Oh, what art thou seeking? for what art thou praying?"
"O captain! O captain! I float on the water,
For the sea giveth up the undutiful daughter.

Oh, take of my father the gold and the treasure,
Oh, take of my mother a fee without measure,
Oh, make me a coffin of deepest gold[1] yellow,
And bury me under the banks of green willow."

The demand of the dead lady was not so readily granted. The captain did not like to take all the treasure that the maiden had carried off, and convert it into a coffin. But night and day the drowned woman followed the ship, and cried out for the restoration of all that of which she had despoiled her parents.

It was clear that she could not sink. The sea rejected her, because of her guilt.

After three days, the sailors became so alarmed at being thus followed by the dead woman, that they insisted on her demand being complied with. So she was again taken on board.

Now, all the gold was brought forth and melted up, and made into a golden coffin, and in that golden coffin her body was laid; and they put in beside her all the jewels she had taken from her parents. Then they lowered the gold coffin into the sea again, and at once it began to float away, with the sun shining on it, and was lost to sight.

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[1] In the original "deepest stole yellow": what stole means I do not know.

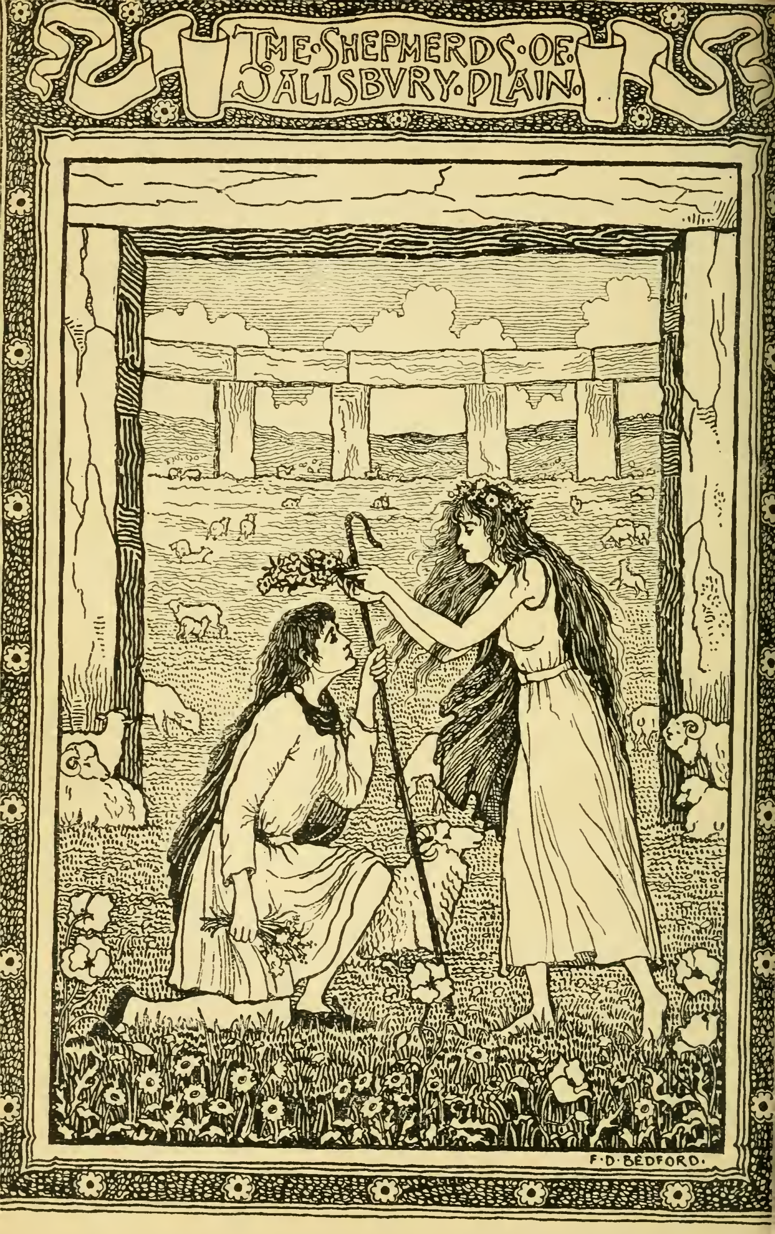
After three days, they were short of water, and so came ashore to fill their casks.

The sails they were spread, and the wind it was blowing,
 The sea was so salt, and the tide it was flowing.
They steered for the land, and they reachèd the shore,
 But the lady in her coffin had got there before.

It was even so. The first thing they saw on coming to land was the gold coffin washed up on the beach. Then they heaved it farther up, to where hung some green willows, and they buried the undutiful daughter under their waving, living green boughs—and so were fulfilled all the words of prophecy told concerning her. She had married a king. She had been driven in a coach by white horses, even by the foaming waves. She had slept in a golden bed,—her coffin,—and been rocked by attendants in blue gowns, even the sea-waves; and she had now been laid under wavy curtains of living green, the branches of the willow.

NOTE.—The old ballad of "The Undutiful Daughter" is one that I have heard from half a dozen aged singers in the west of England. It is always sung to the melody to which "The Frog and the Crow" is set in Mr. W. Crane's *The Baby's Opera*. A similar ballad is found in Scotland, "Bonnie Annie"; it is given by Kinloch, but is more imperfect than the English form of the ballad. In the story I have based on it, all the first part is new; for obvious reasons I have been unable to follow the ballad exactly—that is to say, for reasons obvious to all who are acquainted with the ballad.

There is an old printed ballad entitled "The Faithless Captain; or, The Betrayed Virgin," which seems to be a comparatively modern recast of the older story. All the supernatural element has been eliminated from it. Instead of the damsel being cast overboard because the lot is thrown and falls to her, the ship is nearly wrecked, and she accidentally falls overboard. The body still follows the vessel, and, seeing his bride there in the water, the captain, who, after all, is not faithless, jumps overboard, and is drowned as well.


THE·SHEPHERDS·OF·SALISBURY·PLAIN·
F·D·BEDFORD·

VIII

THE SHEPHERDS OF SALISBURY PLAIN

WHEN was it?—On a Monday morning, at four by the clock, did Duke Gerans die.

And when Gerans, Duke of Dunan Dufeneth—that is to say, of what is now Devonshire, died, he left his daughter Imogen to the care of Melor, Duke of Cornwall. He had no son, this sole daughter, and she was his heir.

Now Duke Melor was an ambitious man, and he thought how that he would like to unite the two duchies under his rule. Therefore he kept Imogen in his court, and had her well watched, and he put her to common duties, such as ill befitted her rank. She was set to wash the clothes, and to card and spin, and make up the fires. And all she got for her work was, "Fie, Imogen! thou art idle!"

Now there was a prince in Wales of the name of Raymond. He was hunting one day, and he rode on in the wood till evening fell. Then all at once the oak trees began to dance. They plaited their branches together, and went round and round in a ring, and shook their leaves, and trailed their roots along the ground. Raymond's horse stood still and trembled.

The owls began to fly about hooting, and the bats to cry and dash to and fro. Then little blue flames appeared on the ground, also in a ring, and danced from left to right, whilst the oaks danced from right to left.

Raymond looked on in great astonishment, and knew not what all this portended.

Then he saw that the oaks began to change shape, and gradually they assumed the forms of old women clad in cobwebs, and with mildew on their heads instead of hair. All at once they stood still, and then with a leap the blue flames sprang on to their heads, disappeared, just as if they had sunk through their crowns, and shone out of their eyes like glow-worms.

The horse on which Raymond rode trembled so greatly as to shake his rider, and he could not count how many old women, and how many pairs of shining eyes, were fixed on him.

Then the earth opened before Raymond, and out of it issued a puff of very white smoke, like steam with moonlight on it, and this smoke became a cloud, and the cloud dispersed, and in the place where it had been he saw a fairy; she was old, wore a crown on her head, and had long silver hair, very fine, that hung down to her feet.

She spoke to Raymond and said, "Prince! I am Morgana, and am the last of the fairies who have power. All these you see about you are those who lived and were mighty in the days of King Arthur. But they are wasted and worn away. I was the youngest of all, and the time of my reign is coming to an end, and then I shall become even as they. For this cause have I appeared to you. Imogen, the daughter of the Duke of Duffeneth, is my godchild. Her father is dead, and she is his heir. The accursed Saxons, with their Nixes and Kobbolds, are flowing on over the land, and driving all the old fairies and pixies into holes and corners. I love the ancient British race. I do not desire to see the Saxons extend their power farther west. Therefore I would have Imogen to be your wife, for you are brave, and belong to the good old Welsh stock. Also, I love my god-child, and would deliver her from her present condition. She is now with the Duke of Cornwall, who does not treat her well, and as becomes her rank. Look here!"

Then the fairy held up a great mirror, and at once it was full of light like a great moon, and in the midst of the blaze stood the figure of a beautiful girl.

"This is she," said Morgana. "This is Imogen, who is to be your wife. Go and deliver her."

Then the glass became clouded and eclipsed. The fairy disappeared, and all the old hags were resolved again into oak trees that were stationary.

After this adventure, Prince Raymond could think only of the beautiful girl he had seen in the mirror, and he had no rest till he had started in quest of her.

At last he reached Cornwall, and he traversed it till he arrived at the palace of the duke. He was received with great honour, and was well entertained. At table he looked round, but nowhere could he see the beautiful damsel of the mirror. There were many fair women present, but none in the least resembled her. He wondered, but said nothing. He remained for several days at the court, but did not see the object of his love; and he began to suspect that he had been duped by a dream.

> One while he melancholy pines
>   Himself with grief away;
> Anon he thinks by force of arms,
>   To win her if he may.

One day, sad at heart, he walked by the side of the river Camel, when he saw that a girl was there washing linen in the water.

He did not concern himself about her, but, as he drew near, he saw her face reflected in the water. There was much light in the sky, and this shone round her face, just as he had seen the beautiful damsel in the fairy Morgana's mirror. He stood still, and looked more attentively, and recognised that this was the very maiden he had had assured to him as his wife.

He at once addressed her with respect, and asked her name. She replied that she was Imogen, daughter of the Duke of Duffeneth. Then he told who he was, and asked her if she would be his true love and bride.

She answered that she could do nothing without the consent of the Duke Mellor of Cornwall, who was her guardian, and she advised the prince to open his purpose to him.

Raymond accordingly went to the palace and declared to the duke that he desired the hand of his ward, the Lady Imogen, in marriage.

The duke was much concerned, but he disguised the embarrassment in which he was, and promised to consider the matter well and discuss it with the duchess and with his counsellors, and he promised to give an answer in three weeks. Meanwhile, he desired the prince to return to his own land and make all preparations to receive his bride in the event, which he did not doubt, of the decision arrived at being favourable.

Prince Raymond at once agreed to this, and, after having in vain solicited an interview with Imogen, to bid her farewell, he departed, more enamoured after having seen her that once by the waterside than he had been when shown her likeness in the magic glass.

Now Duke Mellor acted in subtlety. He had no desire to have his ward married to a powerful prince who would claim the duchy of Duffeneth, and he hasted during the absence of the prince to arrange the marriage of the beautiful and noble Imogen with a common stable-boy.

Imogen was filled with grief and shame when she learned the intention of Duke Mellor. She besought her guardian to allow her to remain as a drudge, and unmarried. She declared that she had no desire to become a wife, and that she abhorred the choice he had made for her. He was deaf to her entreaties.

Then she resolved to effect her escape. She put on her most sordid garments, stained her face and hands with walnut juice, and made up a little bundle of her effects.

> The lady, shifting out of doors,
>   Departed then by stealth,
> Than thus with baseness to be watched
>   Who should have lived in wealth?

The story turns now to the noble Raymond, who, on reaching Wales, found that there had been a revolution during his absence, and that a kinsman had usurped the throne and crown, so that he could not enter his realm. He was therefore obliged to turn his course elsewhere, and was ashamed in these circumstances to go back to Cornwall. He could not ask the beautiful Imogen to share his fortunes, when these were so low at ebb.

His horse took him on through England, till he was obliged to part with him, because he had exhausted all the money he had in his purse.

When he had sold his horse, he lived for a while on the produce, and when that came to an end, he sold his rich apparel, and lived on what he received for that, wearing only a poor dress. At last he was constrained to sell his sword, and he lived a week on the money he had obtained for his sword. Then he hacked away his spurs, that were of gold, and disposed of them to a goldsmith, and was able to maintain himself for one month on what his spurs brought in.

After that, he had nothing more to sell, and rather than starve, he hired himself as a shepherd on Salisbury Plain. Now he began to think with sadness on the loss of the fair Imogen. He valued his lost principality only as a means of winning her.

A brace of years upon that plain,
  Near Salisbury that lies,
In ill content with feeding flocks,
  A shepherd's life he tries.

Now, as he roamed over the plain, he often encountered a shepherdess who was young, and who took care of a flock of sheep. She often sat in the shade of one of the great stones that form Stonehenge. She would pluck the harebells in summer, and form a wreath of them for her hair, and would decorate the little lambs in spring with pretty flowers.

Raymond both observed and spake with her, indeed on that wide and desolate plain there were not many with whom he could converse. He learned that she was the shepherdess to a very old couple who lived at some distance; but she would not tell him much about herself, for she was very shy and modest.

In spring Raymond made himself a pipe of willow, and played to her, sitting by her side among the huge masses of Stonehenge.

Now, not a little to his shame and self-reproach, did he discover that his heart was turning with love to the shepherdess who called herself Maudlin. He wondered that he could forget the beautiful Imogen so soon. Moreover, he thought it great disgrace that he, of royal blood, should love so much a poor peasantess. But he considered further that fate was against him, that he had not the smallest chance of recovering his principality, and that therefore as a shepherd he must live and die. If, then, he was to remain a shepherd, it would be sensible to submit to what could not be helped, and marry a girl of the class to which he had been cast down.

Now, it will be remembered that the fairy Morgana had appeared to Prince Raymond and had shown him the image of Imogen in a glass, and had urged him on to go into Cornwall and ask for her to be his wife. She had not forgotten Raymond in his trouble and exile, and one day, whilst he was sitting along with Maudlin under one of the great stones of Stonehenge, she suddenly appeared before them, dressed all in green, and with her silvery hair fluttering about her head, so that she looked like a living daisy.

She said to the young people as they started to their feet, "Do not be afraid of me. I will do you no harm. I will take care of your interests; but to assure my favour, I desire one thing of you. There is a fountain of the purest water that bubbles up at some little distance from this spot. I desire you to go every morning and clear out this spring. A hideous toad jumps into it at night, and unless this toad be taken out before the sun's rays fall on the water, great mischief must ensue. Therefore I ask if you will undertake this for me, to cleanse the fountain, and remove the toad every morning early. I do not force you to do it. I ask you if you will. But, remember, if you freely undertake to do this thing for me, I expect that you will fulfil your undertaking."

The young people cheerfully promised to do what the fairy had requested, and she pointed out the spring to them, and then vanished.

And now, every morning, they rose very early, and met at Stonehenge, and went on together to the well, and cleared it out and threw out the hideous toad; and this they did daily before the sun ascended into the sky.

This went on for some while. At last came Midsummer Eve, and then there is really no darkness at night at all. The two young peasants met very early indeed at the circle of Stonehenge, and, because it was so early, they thought there was plenty of time before them; and because it was Midsummer morning, Maudlin had collected flowers, and she was weaving a wreath for the head of the young shepherd, her companion; and he, on his side, had collected a posy and bound it with a green rush, and had brought his pipes, wherewith to play her a tune. But, instead of continuing to play his pipes, he put the instrument down on the grass, and sang to her the following song—

"The ploughman's labour hath no end,
  And he doth churlish prove;
The tradesman hath more work in head
  Than doth consort with love;

The merchant venturing abroad,
  Is ever on the roam;
The sailor tosses on the seas,
  He rarely is at home.

Then choose a shepherd, bonnie girl,
  Whose life is merry still,
Who gaily spendeth all his day
  Upon the fair green hill;

And when at eve the day is done,
  Returneth home betime,
And at the fire turns a crab,
  And sings some merry rhyme.

Nor lacks he tales, while round about
  The nut-brown bowl doth trot,
And sitting sings his cares away,
  Till he to bed be got.

Then sleeps he soundly all the night,
  Regards not morrow's cares,
Nor fears the blasting of his corn,
  Nor the wrecking of his wares.

Oh, this I know full well, fair lass,
  More quiet nights and days
The shepherd sleeps and wakes, than he
  Whose cattle he doth graze.

A king, in truth, is but a man,
  And that, sweet lass, am I.
Content is worth a monarchy,
  But mischiefs shoot full high."

It was a pretty song. When he had done, he saw that the damsel was in tears.

Then he said, "This is very truth. Those who sit high, at them doth Mischance aim her bow. It is through the hearts of the greatest on earth that the keenest arrows pierce."

"That is indeed so," observed the girl. "Those who stand on the ground cannot be cast down, only such as be on high."

"It is with us," said Raymond, "that we are in a lowly condition, and in our lowliness are not exposed to great tribulation. Now listen: I will tell you a story.

"There was once upon a time a young prince, and he rode into a distant duchy to seek himself a wife. When he arrived in that duchy"—

"What duchy was it?" asked Maudlin.

"The duchy of Cornwall," answered Raymond.

Then he continued: "When he was there, he saw the most beautiful damsel imaginable—curiously enough, now that I look on you, you remind me of her greatly."

"Where did he see her?" asked Maudlin.

"That is singular—he saw her face in the water. She was stooping over the river washing clothes. But to proceed. The prince asked her hand of the duke, and he was bidden return to his principality in Wales and make all ready for the wedding. Accordingly he departed, but when he reached his native province, he found that a cousin had usurped his power and dominion; so that he, from being a great man, had been cast very low. So in this case

Mischief shot full high.

And in such distress was he that he was constrained to sell his horse, and his garments, and his sword and gold spurs—and at last to become"—

Then Raymond hastily arrested himself.

Thereupon Maudlin smiled, and said, "And did the prince forget the beautiful damsel, and fall in love with another?"

Raymond coloured crimson—he could not answer her. Then she said—

"I grant, fair youth, you loved her well.
  If that your love were such,
Yet think of me, your second love,
  In love to be as much.

Your twice-beloved maid is here,
  Submits herself to thee,
And what she could not at the first,
  The second time shall be.

In fortune, not in person changed.
  For I am still the same,
In heart and mind as chaste and true
  As first to me you came."

You cannot imagine the joy and surprise of Raymond when he discovered that the shepherdess of Salisbury Plain was no other than his dear Imogen, and that, thinking himself to be false, he had all the while been true.

Then she told her story, how she had fled from the court of the Duke of Cornwall, and had taken service with a poor old couple on the edge of Salisbury Plain.

Then, all at once, the sun rose and flashed on the two as they sat talking, and Maudlin—or Imogen, as her real name was—cried out that they had forgotten about the fountain.

At once they hastened to it; Imogen carrying the wreath she had been wearing, and Raymond with the pipe in his hand. They ran to the hawthorn bush under which bubbled up the spring, and, she kneeling on one side, and he on the other, they thrust their hands into the water, to draw out the toad and to cleanse the spring. But whilst thus engaged, groping for the foul reptile, the sun, already risen, shone into the water.

At once the spring became turbid, bubbles rose in it, and then great bursts of water, so that Raymond and Imogen started back in haste, one on each side.

The water boiled forth with fury, great spouts rose into the air, and the amount was so great that the fountain became a lake, and Imogen and Raymond had even to step farther back from the advancing waters.

They were so astonished, they hardly thought what to do. Then Imogen cried out that the wreath of flowers she was plaiting was carried away on the water, and Raymond exclaimed that his pipe was dancing on the foaming waves.

Now the spring broke through all bounds and the volume of water poured forth in a river, and Imogen ran down the stream on one side, pursuing her floating garland, and Raymond on the other side, endeavouring to recover his pipe that was washed away.

But presently all thought of garland and pipe was gone from them, for they saw themselves divided by a great river as broad as the Thames; and it rushed along at a great rate.

Raymond, seeing Imogen crying on the farther bank, plunged in to endeavour to cross and reach her, but the flood swept him off his feet and carried him down. Imogen tore her hair and ran on, in the utmost terror, which was only allayed when she saw her dear friend scramble ashore on the farther bank.

So they hasted on all through the day. At last Imogen became alarmed as to what might happen to her if night fell, and she saw a tree that was uprooted and was being carried down by the current, and she threw herself among the branches, in the hopes that it would float her across to Raymond.

Now the drifting tree went into the midst of the rush of water, and was swept along there, without drawing near to either bank. When Raymond saw this, he went into the water again and swam, and did not desist till Imogen held out her hand as he approached the tree, and helped him up into the branches.

By this time, night had come on. The sun was set, but as it was midsummer, there was much light in the sky; moreover, the moon was as a crescent of the colour of gold. All through the night they were swept along, till they heard the roar of the sea, and presently, at dawn, beheld the rising sun flash on the foam of the breakers rolling in.

When they reached the spot where the waves met the river, then they were tossed about, and washed off the tree; but they would not let go each other's hand, and the blue waves carried them gently and threw them up on the sand. They were so exhausted as to be insensible.

When they opened their eyes, the fairy Morgana stood before them. She reproached them for their neglect of what they had undertaken. She said to them: "My children, never be so engrossed in your own concerns as to forget the duties you owe to others. That is one lesson I hope you have learned. But there is another I wish you to take to heart. When difficulties occur, do not struggle against them, but try to circumvent them. If you had not been foolish, both of you, and thought of something else except your wreath and pipe, you would have gone round the head of the river, which might have been done with the utmost ease, instead of running down the stream and then endeavouring to stem the current. Most difficulties may be got round at their source, which can never be overpassed if allowed to grow in volume. That is the second lesson. And now, your troubles are near their end. I will call my carriage and restore you to where you were."

She clapped her hands, and at once a carriage made of green rushes appeared, drawn by a thousand field-mice. She insisted on Imogen entering, she entered herself, and made Raymond sit on the box beside an old rat who was coachman.

So they drove through the land till they reached Salisbury Plain, till they arrived at the house of the old couple with whom Imogen had lived, and, when they arrived, they found there a great concourse of people with horses and armour.

The Duke of Cornwall was dead, and the people of Duffeneth had risen to demand their own duchess, and had sent out messengers who had traced her in her flight to the cottage by Salisbury Plain. She was now clothed in magnificent robes, and was mounted on a dapple grey, but she insisted on Raymond accompanying her. She returned to Exeter, where she was proclaimed duchess, and then she married Raymond.

Soon after, she lent him troops, and he marched to Wales, and speedily recovered his own principality.

And so these lovely princes both
  Each other did befriend,
Where, after many a hard mishap,
  Their lives had joyful end.

NOTE.—This is based on the old English ballad of "The Strange Lives of two Young Princes in England," which was printed in *A Collection of Old Ballads*, 1725, vol. iii. The earlier part is so distinctly founded on the story of Havelock the Dane and Argentile, that I have somewhat altered it, as this latter story is given in this collection. After the flight of the damsel, then the story no longer bears any resemblance to that of Havelock. The ballad as it comes to us is not in its original shape, but is a rewriting of a much earlier one, in the reign of Elizabeth or James I. The collector of the *Old Ballads* supposed that this composition was founded on the story of Raymond Fitzgerald, the conqueror of Ireland, who married Basilia, sister of Richard Strongbow, in 1174. But there is nothing save the name to favour this hypothesis.

All the portion of the fairy of the fountain is imported into it by me from a story in *A New Collection of Fairy Tales, none of which were ever before printed*, in two volumes, London, 1750. It is somewhat of a surprise to me that among the many collections of modern days, this curious old book has not been noticed and stories taken from it.

IX

KING HORN

IX

KING HORN

THERE lived in times long gone by, a king of the name of Murray, and he ruled over the Western Isles, which went by the name of the kingdom of Sodor. He had a good wife and a little son, and the name of this son was Horn.

Now this was at the time when the Norsemen sailed round the coasts of England and Scotland and Ireland, plundering and burning and slaying.

One day King Murray rode out, attended by two knights, and, when he came to the beach, he found that a fleet of Vikings had just arrived and disembarked. Before he could fly, they killed him. Then they went up to his palace, and the queen had but just time to escape in the confusion, and to hide herself in a cave among the rocks.

As for the little Prince Horn, he was out at the time, playing with two other boys of his own age, whose names were Athulf and Fikenhild.

At first the Norse pirates thought they would kill Horn, but, instead of doing this, they put him and his two companions in a small boat, and thrust it out to sea.

Then the sea began to flow,
And Horn child to row;
And the sea the boat did sweep,
Far, far out, over the deep.

The three boys were in the boat all night; they were cold and hungry and frightened. Happily, no storm arose. They knew not where they drifted. At last, day dawned. Athulf and Fikenhild had fallen asleep with crying and with weariness. Now, as the sky began to lighten, Horn touched his companions, woke them, and said—

"Friends young, list to me,
I will say a word of glee.
I hear the sweet birds sing,
I see the green grass spring."

The two sleepers sat up in a boat, and they saw a coast not far off, and the tide was carrying them up upon the yellow sands.

They were very glad now, and, with their hands in the water, they rowed, for they had no oars, and at last ran ashore.

Then they jumped out, and Horn, turning to the little boat, said—

"Ship, by the sea flood
Days have thou good,
By the sea brink,
In water do not sink.
If to Suderey you come,
Greet kin at home,
Greet the queen my mother,
And of friends each other."

Then he thrust the little boat from land, and saw it swim away on the falling tide.

Horn and his companions walked up on the land, and at last met with men who told them they were come into Westerness, which may have been Argyle. There reigned over this little realm a king called Aylmar, and he received the three boys very kindly, and asked whence they had come.

Horn spoke for them all, and told his story.

Then Aylmar summoned his steward, who was named Athelbert, and told him to see to Horn and his comrades, and to give them a good education, which consisted in being able to play the harp, carve the meat, and serve the wine. This is what he said—

"You must teach him to harp,
With his nails cut sharp,
Before me to carve,
And of the cup to serve."

So time passed, and Horn and his companions grew up into tall, handsome young men.

Now the king had got a daughter named Rymenhild, and she saw Horn, and took a great fancy to him, and one day asked Athelbert to contrive that she should have a talk with him.

Athelbert agreed, but he was somewhat disconcerted, because he did not know whether the king would approve of it. Horn was indeed a very handsome and well-educated youth, but his kingdom was spoiled and taken possession of by the Norsemen, who already occupied the Orkney Isles, and had tried to get hold of Ireland. However, he did not like to refuse the princess, and so he contrived that they should meet.

Now King Aylmar had no son, so that Rymenhild was his heir. She told Horn that she loved him dearly, and that she wished him to plight to her his word that he would marry her and no one else.

Horn replied that he really was not worthy of such an honour, but that he would consider her proposal after he had been dubbed knight. So the princess urged the steward to persuade her father to make Horn a knight.

Athelbert agreed to this, and he went before the king, and represented to him that Horn was now of age to receive knighthood, that he could do all that was required of a knight with lance and sword, and that his birth was royal, and he was entitled to knighthood.

Aylmar consented to this: he called for Horn, and thereupon dubbed him knight.

Now, as soon as Horn had been knighted, he at once proceeded to confer knighthood on his comrades, Athulf and Fikenhild.

Then Horn went before the princess, and said that, as he was a knight, he must go forth on his adventures, and show that he was worthy of the honour he had received. He promised that if he came back, he would ask for her hand.

Then she gave to Horn a gold ring with a stone in it, and on the stone was engraved her own likeness. And she told him that the property of the ring was to carry him safe and sound through all danger.

Then Horn went down to the shore.

He arrived most opportunely, for just then a Norwegian pirate ship had run up to the shore.

Horn and his companions at once fell on them, took them by surprise, routed them, and he cut off the head of their leader, and came back to the palace, carrying it by the hair, and he placed it on the table before the king.

Now it must be told that Fikenhild was false at heart, and he had whispered into the king's ear that Horn had conceived a plan of poisoning the cup he offered the king, so as to kill him, then possess himself of Rymenhild, and ascend the throne of Westerness.

After Horn had put the Viking's head on the table, he went to Rymenhild to tell her what he had done. He found her in tears, and this was what she said: She had dreamt, and thought she had gone out fishing, and had caught a fine and beautiful fish. But the net burst, and the fish fell out.

Horn comforted her as well as he was able, and pledged himself to be good and true to her.

Now, Aylmar believed the lying tale told him by Fikenhild, and he drove Horn away from his presence, and bade him leave the realm.

Before Horn departed, he bade Athulf remain behind and watch over Rymenhild, and see that none harmed her, and he promised that in seven years he would return and claim Rymenhild for wife.

Then he took ship and departed.

The ship sailed west, and he landed in Ireland, where he was well received by the king, whose name was Thorstan, and by the two princes, Harold and Berild. But he did not give his real name, he called himself Cutberd.

Now it fell out that at Yule, which is Christmas, there came a Berserkr, with a number of Northmen, and he defied the king and his men to fight.

But Cutberd stood up and offered to take the adventure upon him.

This the king reluctantly allowed. But, in fact, Horn had recognised in this big Berserkr the commander of the expedition that had come on his father's land, and had killed his father.

You must understand what these Berserkrs were. They were Northern men who worked themselves up into mad fury, when foam dropped from their mouths, they gnawed the tops of their shields, they had in their madness twice the strength of ordinary men, and believed that when the fit was on them, no steel would wound them. It was something like possession by an evil spirit, and we hear a good deal about it in old Norse history. There is no doubt that these Berserkrs were mad at the time. When the fit was off them, they were so exhausted, they could scarce move for hours.

Now Horn knew the man, and he was resolved to avenge his father. He had on the ring given him by Rymenhild, and his own trusty armour.

Horn now fought the Berserkr, and after a furious onslaught killed him. Then the Irishmen rushed on the fellows of the Norse chief, and killed them all; but it was a hard fight, and the pirates behaved so bravely, and made such a stubborn stand, that the two princes, Harold and Berild, fell in the fray.

King Thorstan was much grieved at the death of his sons, and he now offered his daughter to Cutberd to be his wife. But Cutberd said he could not take her, as he had promised to be true to another fair lady; but he undertook to remain with Thorstan for seven years, to help him against his enemies.

Now it must be told how that time slipped away, and the seven years were nearly at an end. King Aylmar had resolved to have his daughter married, and had looked out for her King Modi of Rennes, in Brittany, who had come all the long distance to seek him a wife. Rymenhild had refused to hear anything of him, but the seven years were nearly over, and her father was greatly set on the marriage, and she hardly knew what to do. Then the faithful Athulf sent messengers in all directions to seek Horn, and to tell him to come at once, and deliver Rymenhild from the difficulties in which she was placed.

One day it fell out that Horn was hunting, when he met a little foot-page in the wood, and he asked him who he was and whence he came.

The little page said he had been sent from Westerness by Athulf to bid him return at once, as the Princess Rymenhild was about to be married to King Modi.

Horn at once bade the boy return as swiftly as he could, and say he would arrive next Sunday morning.

Unhappily, whilst the little foot-page was returning by ship, a storm arose and wrecked the vessel, and all therein were drowned.

Now Rymenhild watched every day, expecting Horn to come, and at last reluctantly she had promised her father that if he did not arrive on the following Sunday, she would do as he desired.

Then the sand washed up to her feet the body of the little foot-page, and she knew he had been drowned, and she greatly feared either lest he should have perished on his way to Horn, or, worse still, had been wrecked along with Horn on his way back. Then she gave herself quite up to despair.

Horn, nevertheless, was on his way. When he received the news, he went before King Thorstan, and told him both who he was, and what was his present need. He asked him to let him have some Irish kernes to come with him and fight for him, if there were need to fight.

King Thorstan readily assented, and speedily Horn had a ship made ready, and entered it with his men, and sailed for Westerness.

He was much detained by the storm in which had foundered the boat of the foot-page. But at length he arrived on the coast of Westerness, and he and his men went on shore, and he bade them all abide hidden in a wood till he summoned them.

Then he went forward by himself, and he met a palmer coming along in a grey suit, with his cockle-shell and his long staff.

Horn stood before the palmer, and stayed him, and asked him what news.

The palmer said that there was great news, for that day the king's daughter, the Princess Rymenhild, had been married to the King of Brittany, and that there was to be a great feast in the palace, but that all told how sad the princess was, and that her eyes were red with tears.

Then Horn asked the palmer to change dresses with him. He agreed, and Horn went on his way disguised, and he took berries of blaeberry, and stained his face and hands, that none might know him. So he went to the king's gate.

He came to the gate-ward
That answered him full hard.
Horn bade him undo soft,
Many time and oft;
But ne'er could he win
That the man should let him in.

Horn began the gate to turn
And the latchet unspurn.
The porter-boy—he by his rig
Horn took and threw over the brig,
That his ribs him did break,
And so Horn passed the gate.

When Horn had got through by this means, he ranged himself among the beggars. He looked out for his faithful Athulf, but could not see him, because Athulf was on a high tower looking for Horn to arrive with his men; and though he had seen the palmer arrive, it had not struck him that this could be his dear master.

Presently the princess came down, and not only were her eyes red with weeping, but the tears were on her cheeks, and the roses had faded out of her face.

She saw the beggars, and, full of gentle compassion, she filled a great silver-mounted horn with wine, and handed it to the beggars. All drank except the palmer, who sat down on the floor, and held out his bowl of rough pottery. The ancient poet says—

Her horn she laid down
And filled him from a brown (pitcher)
His bowl that held a gallon
For she weened he was a glutton.

Then he spoke to her, and said, "I am not a beggar. I will not drink wine save out of a white mug. I am a fisherman, and my nets are close by. They have been lying in the sea these seven years, and I am come to see if a fish be in them."

The princess was much surprised at what he said. She was more surprised when he said, "Come, fair lady, fill up the horn and drink the health of Horn."

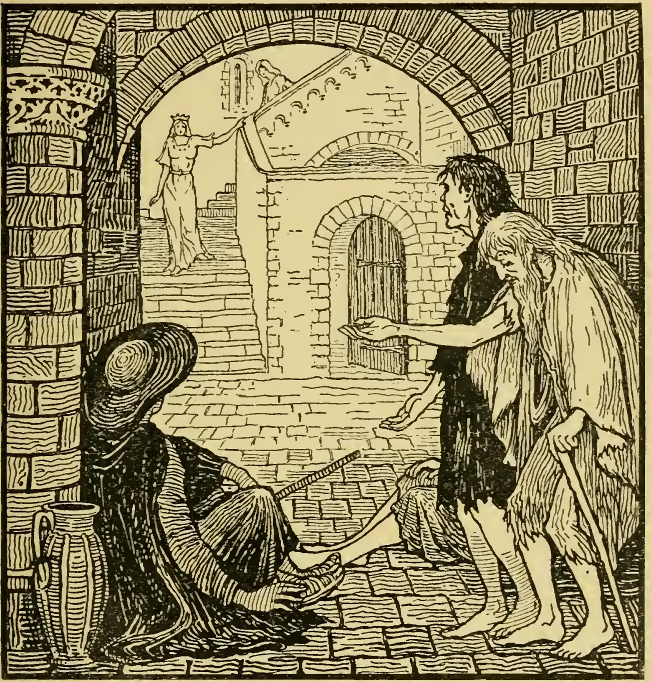
She put the silver-lipped horn to her mouth, but she so trembled that she spilled the wine. Then she stooped, when the wine was spilled, and as she stooped, she said to the palmer, "Why speak you of Horn? Have you seen him?"

Then the palmer dropped the ring in the wine, and she took it up and knew it again, and well-nigh fainted. She hastily retired among her maidens, to her bower, and sent one of them to bring the palmer to her.

Now Horn came in, and speedily he told her who he was, and how that his men were at hand in a wood, and that he would deliver her from King Modi.

Thereat Rymenhild was right joyous, and Horn went, and bade her send Athulf to him into the wood. And she did so.

Then they armed, and marched towards the castle of King Aylmar, and blew a trumpet, and Horn proclaimed who he was, and that he had come to demand the princess.



Then King Modi bade his men arm, and the gates be thrown open, and he rushed forth, with intent to cut to pieces both Horn and his men. But Horn and his Irishmen made a good fight, and the end was that Modi fell, and his men were routed. Horn pushed on into the palace, and appeared before King Aylmar, and told him all the story of his acts, and convinced him that there had been slanderous accusations made against him.

Then he asked King Aylmar to let him have Rymenhild for wife, but said that he had no purpose to marry her till he had reconquered his own kingdom of Sodor, or the Sudereys.

The king consented, and though Rymenhild was sorry that he should leave so soon, yet she saw that he was very determined to marry her as a king and not as an outcast, Before he departed, Horn was inclined to severely punish Fikenhild, but his old comrade fell on his knees before him and entreated forgiveness, and swore that he would be true to him evermore. And because Horn remembered how they had been playfellows together, and how together they had fared in the open boat, he was softened, and forgave him.

Horn departed, and he took with him the Irish kernes lent him by King Thorstan, and he had with him as well his faithful Athulf, and some men from Westerness, who were glad to serve under him. When Horn landed in Sudderey, he found a man bound to a tree, and he asked him who he was. The man replied that he was a knight, and had been a servant of King Murray, but now he was badly treated by the Norsemen, who ruled the isles. Then he said how that the natives were weary of the Norsemen, and how they wondered that Horn did not return to claim his own.

Horn now told him who he was, and wherefore he had come. He released him from his bonds, and bade him go about and tell his people secretly to be ready and rise suddenly on their tyrants, and he would be with them to aid them.

Now all happened right as Horn devised, and he was able to slay the Northmen, and those he did not slay he drove out of his father's old realm. And now there was great rejoicing in the isles, and Horn was overjoyed to find his mother still alive, in the cave in which she had concealed herself these many years.

In the meantime, things had not been going well with Rymenhild. It must be told that at the time King Aylmar had grown old and childish, and for seven years Fikenhild had been at his side as counsellor, and had gained such a complete mastery over the old king, that he could make him think and do just what he liked.

Fikenhild was very ill pleased at the return of Horn, and at his own humiliation, and he was not at all grateful that his life had been spared.

He began now to scheme how he might take advantage of Horn's absence; and he talked to the foolish old king, and turned him about just as he wished. Fikenhild persuaded the king that Horn had been killed by the Norsemen in Sudderey, and that the Norse were coming on to attack the kingdom of Westerness.

When Aylmar heard this, he was in a great fright, and he asked what was to be done. Fikenhild answered that he must give him Rymenhild as wife, and appoint him to succeed him in the kingdom, then the people would rally round him as their future sovereign, and fight bravely, under his leading, against the invaders.

The king gave his consent; but Rymenhild would not listen to a word Fikenhild said. She would not believe that Horn was dead.

So Fikenhild built a strong tower by the sea, which could only be reached at low tide, and he carried off the princess and set her therein, and said that there she should remain till she consented to marry him.

Now one night Horn had a dream: he thought that Rymenhild was on a rock in the sea, and the tide was rising, and she was in great peril of being drowned, and she stretched forth her arms, and cried to Horn to help her.

Next morning Horn mounted his ship, and took his companions with him, and sailed for Westerness, and as it chanced, as they neared, they saw a new white tower standing in the sea. Horn greatly wondered, because this tower was not there when he departed, so he ran his ships under the walls, and there saw, sitting on the rocks, a man who was Athulf's cousin. Horn told who he was, and asked about the tower. Then he learned all the treachery of Fikenhild.

So he and his men hastily disguised themselves as harpers, and put on long cloaks over their armour. They came to the tower door, and said they were a party of minstrels, and asked to be admitted.

Rymenhild bade them be allowed to come in; and Fikenhild's men made no demur, for—

Horn said, they were harpers
And some were gigerers (fiddlers).

Now, when they came into the hall, Horn took his harp and sang a ballad, and the ballad was the story of Rymenhild and her sorrows, and the burden of every verse was Rymenhild's wail of—

"Well-away! Ah, well-away!"

This made the princess weep bitterly.

Then, all at once, Horn drew his fingers across the harp with a mighty clang, threw off his cloak, his fellows did the same, and they drew their swords, and were speedily masters of the castle; and as it happened that Fikenhild was then in it, they had him also in their power. He was ordered to be tied to the tails of wild horses and torn to pieces.

And now not much more remains to be told.

There was a joyous marriage of Horn and Rymenhild, and after that Horn went back to Ireland, and got King Thorstan to give his daughter to the faithful Athulf. Then Horn went back with his wife to Sudderey.

NOTE—The old English lay of Horn exists in three MSS., one in the Cambridge University Library, one in the Bodleian, and one in the British Museum. It is a very early tale, for it was translated from English into French by a Norman poet of the reign of Richard I., and the French *lai* is still extant.

There is no historic basis for this story. In the MSS. the kingdom of Murray is Suddene, which I venture to suppose is Suderey or Sodor,—the Hebrides or Western Isles. The incident of Horn sitting among the beggars is like that of Cadwallo, King of the Britons, at the gate of Edwin, King of Northumbria, in Roger of Wendover; and, in a measure, is like that of the return of Ulysses.

An example or two must be added to show the language of the original.

He dude horn inn late
Rigt at halle gate,
He sette him on the benche
His harpe for to clenche.
He makede Rymenhilde lay
And heo (she) maked Walaway.
Rymenhild feol yswoge (swooning),
Ne was there none that louge (laughed),
Hit smot to hornes herte
So bitere that hit smerte.

The lay of Horn has been edited by J. R. Lumby for the Early EnglishText Society," 1866.

X

HAVELOCK AND ARGENTILE

X

HAVELOCK AND ARGENTILE

THERE was once in Denmark a great king named Gunter, and he had a wife and one little son, who was called Havelock.

Now there rose up war in Denmark, a great rebellion broke out, and the castle of King Gunter was entered and set on fire, and the king was killed.

The nurse of little Havelock said to the queen, "Follow me. We must fly, or the wicked rebels will kill you and the young prince. My husband is captain of a ship, and he is now in harbour. Let us get on board, and he will spread sail, and carry us away where Prince Havelock can be kept safely till the good times return."

So the queen consented, and fled with the good woman to the sea, and they went on board. The captain, whose name was Grim, at once hoisted sail, and the ship flew out on the blue sea.

But they had not been sailing many days before a pirate vessel hove in sight, and ran alongside of the merchantman. The captain and all his crew fought desperately, and drove away the pirates. The fight had been so furious that all his men were killed or wounded. By the greatest piece of good luck he himself escaped.

The terror in which the good queen was, whilst the battle had been waged, and the sense of her great loss in the death of her dear husband, King Gunter, and of the kingdom of Denmark, so overcame her, that her spirits sank, and she died at sea. Then there arose a dreadful storm, and to save the vessel the captain was obliged to throw all the lading into the sea. He could hardly manage the ship himself alone—and all the wounded sailors died. At last the gale drove the vessel as a wreck upon the Lincolnshire coast, and it was stranded at the place afterwards called from him, Grimsby.

Then the captain and his wife came on shore, and, forasmuch as they were without means, they took the wreck, sawed it in half, and turned it into a house by the side of the sea. Happily the little boat belonging to the ship was uninjured, and the captain used this for going out fishing. Luck attended him, and he sold his fish well. What he did not sell, that he and his wife and the little Havelock ate. The fish were turbot, salmon, mullets, porpoises, mackerel in great plenty, and great junks of whale, with the blubber.

Now the nurse was a skilful cook, and she dressed all the fish that they ate in the finest and most dainty way, and little Havelock watched her, and soon learned to cook quite as well as she.

As the nurse and her husband did not desire that the child should be known, they did not call him by his true name, but always Cueran; and he grew up to believe that the fisherman and his wife were his father and mother, and he had no thought but that Cueran[1] was his right name.

In time the fisherman Grim became much better off, and, instead of going out fishing, he became a salt-merchant. He made pans and put sea-water in them, and his wife lit fires under the pans, and strained the water away. Then there was left in the pans only beautiful white salt.

The good man and his wife had two sons of their own. They were younger than Cueran, and they loved him and served him as an elder brother. Cueran's supposed father and mother often said to him, "Let no one ever see you asleep; for if you are seen asleep, great mischief may come of it." They would not allow him at night to be in the same bedroom with the two boys of their own, for they did not wish these two to see the lad, who, they thought, was their elder brother, when he was asleep. Why that was, that you shall hear presently.

Now the salt-merchant went about the country selling salt; but at home, at Grimsby, his wife minded the pans, and the two young boys kept up the fire under them. In order that they might work, they must eat, so Cueran remained in the old wrecked ship turned into a house and cooked the dinner, and his nurse used to say that he surpassed her in cooking just as a king surpasses common men and the rose excels the daisy.

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[1] Cueran in the old British tongue means a scullion or cook.

It happened one day that the king of that country came to Grimsby, and this was the reason of his coming. The queen had run short of salt, and there had been no salt in the palace when the dinner was cooked one day. The food was so tasteless that the king could not eat it, and he said, "If you can't put in salt, put in something else."

Next day the queen put soda with all the meat, into all the puddings and pies; and the dinner was so nasty that the king pushed his dish away, and said he could not eat it.

Then the queen said he must go to Grimsby and buy her salt of the merchant there.

The king said he would do so. He rode and he rode till he came near Grimsby, and as he drew near, he lifted up his nose and said, "Good! good!" for he smelt fried herrings.

He had not gone much farther before he sniffed again and said, "I am sure they are cooking turbot which is eaten with oyster sauce."

He had not gone farther before his eyes began to twinkle and his mouth to water, and he said, "I would, oh I would that I had some of that whale blubber I smell cooking so daintily!"

Then he put spurs into his horse's sides, and galloped till he came to the cottage on the beach made out of the old wreck, and there all the delicate smells of all the different courses that were being cooked for dinner that day were mingled just as in pot-pourri are mingled rose-leaves, thyme, bay salt, orris root, and lavender.

The king jumped off his horse, went in, and found that Cueran was engaged preparing dinner for his father and mother and brothers. The king was very hungry after three days' fast—for he had not eaten anything that day, nor all the day before when he had refused the soda-seasoned victuals, nor on the day before that, when he had rejected the wholly unseasoned meats.

The king was so hungry that he could not contain himself, and he insisted on Cueran dishing up.

And then he sat at the meal, and ate up every one of the seven courses, and even the entremets, which were scallops and winkles and a mayonnaise of lobster.

Presently the merchant and his wife came in with their sons, and the king said he had come for salt, which the merchant was very ready to sell. Then he said he positively must have the young cook-lad, to make him his own cook in the royal kitchen, for the cook he had had the queen had dismissed for impertinence and wasting the coals.

The merchant and his wife were very reluctant to lose their dear Cueran, but when they saw that the king had set his mind on it, they were obliged to consent; but they made two conditions,—one was that he should have his young brothers with him to serve as scullions, and the other that he should have a room to himself in which to sleep, and not be put into the common dormitory.

The king consented, and would have granted much more, had they asked it, so eager was he to secure this perfection of a cook.

So Cueran became the head cook in the palace of the King of Norfolk. The name of the king was Edelsi.

Now it must be told that the brother-in-law of the King of Norfolk was King of Essex, and had his capital at Colchester. His name was Edelbert, and he had married Orwain, the sister of the King of Norfolk, who had his capital at Lindsey.

The King of Essex died, and he left the charge of his wife and his daughter Argentile, and of his kingdom, to his friend and brother-in-law Edelsi.

The poor Queen Orwain was broken-hearted at the loss of her husband, and she lived only twenty days after him, and her body was laid beside his at Colchester.

King Edelsi was greedy after other things beside herrings, turbot, and whale blubber. He desired land as well. When King Edelbert was dead, he thought he would annex the kingdom of Essex to the kingdom of Norfolk and Lincoln, for these two counties were then comprised in one realm. To do this, he must put aside his niece Argentile. He was not so wicked as to think of killing her. He thought it would be quite sufficient if he married her to the cook. After that, no one would think of making a queen of her, so he supposed.

Argentile arrived at the court at Lindsey, and very little was made of her, and she did not say who she was, nor did the king declare that she was his niece. He told his wife, the queen, that she was a young woman he had hired to help the man cook in his work; and, to make sure that she kept the place, as kitchen-maids in those days were very flighty, he was resolved to marry her to Cueran.

Argentile cried much when she heard that her uncle was going thus to degrade her. She entreated him not to persevere in his purpose, but he would not be dissuaded, and the marriage took place. The king took care there should be plenty of witnesses, and the bridegroom made and sugared his own bridecake. All went well for some time. Cueran was very handsome and well made; he had a beautiful face and beautiful hands, indeed so delicate were his fingers that he had but to touch dough with the tips of them, and the most beautiful puff paste was the result. He was also very strong, and if anyone showed him any impertinence, he wrestled with him and threw him, and would tie his arms and legs with his sash, and not let him go till he had promised amendment. The king and the knights were so fond of him that at his wedding they left him some of the cakes and puddings and tarts, and graciously condescended not to consume all his wedding cake. They took off all the sugar and the almond-paste, but graciously allowed him and his wife to eat some of the dark currant substance.

One night Argentile awoke from a dream that had troubled her; and she touched Cueran so as to wake him, that she might tell him her dream. Then she was greatly frightened and astonished to see a flame issuing from his mouth. Presently the flame danced on to the floor, ran along, passed through the keyhole, and disappeared. Argentile was dreadfully alarmed. She shook her husband, but he was as one senseless, she could not wake him. At last she saw a flame come from the keyhole, run along the floor, and jump into Cueran's mouth again. Then he opened his eyes and asked what she wanted.

She told him what she had seen—a flame in his mouth that left him, and was away for an hour, and then returned to him, and that all the while the flame was absent he was as one dead.

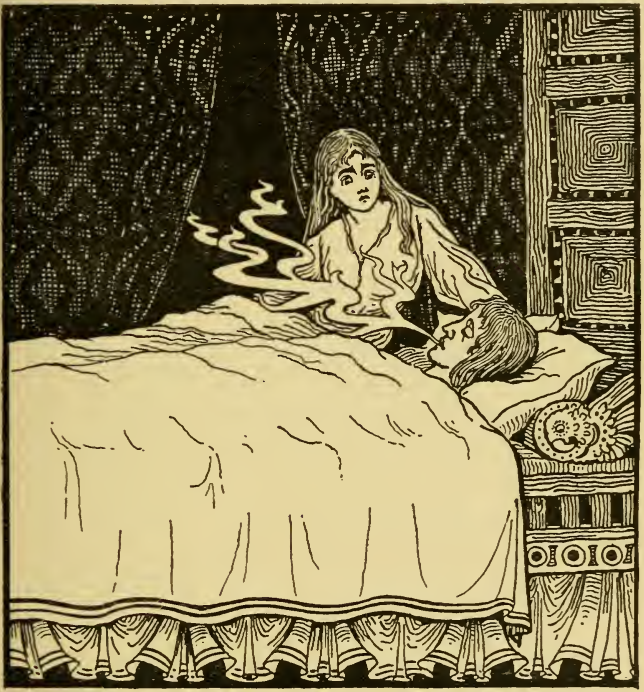
"I do not know what this can be," answered the cook. "All I can say is, that in dream I went to Grimsby to see my father and mother. When I got back, I felt you trying to rouse me."

"That which I desired to tell you," said Argentile, "was a dream I had."

"Tell it me," said Cueran; "but I think dreams are often great nonsense."

"I dreamed," said Argentile, "that there was a great bear, and round the bear were many little foxes. Then there came a huge boar, and it rushed at the bear and gored it till it died, and when it was dead, then all the little foxes came wagging their tails and fawning on the boar. And the boar went rooting about in quest of you, and to escape it you ran up into a tree, and then the sea rose and washed the tree away with you clinging to it, and threw you up on our shores. Then I thought you pushed the tree back into the water and got on it, and swam away, and landed where the boar was, and you fought and killed the boar, and then all the foxes came to lick your hands."

"I know what this means," said Cueran. "There has been a great hunt to-day, and a wild boar has been killed and will be cooked to-morrow. I shall cut it up."



"I do not think this is the interpretation of the dream," said the princess doubtfully. "What does the tree mean?"

"It means the logs that will burn to boil the boar."

"And the sea that rose?" asked Argentile.

"That means the copper boiling in which the junks of boar-flesh will be stewing."

The princess was not satisfied.

"I am sure," she said, "you are no ordinary man. Common men do not have flames in their mouths. I wish you would get leave to go and visit your father and mother at Grimsby, and take me and your brothers with you."

"I was even thinking of that," said Cueran. "It is but right that they should see their daughter-in-law."

So next day Cueran asked leave of King Edelsi to go to Grimsby and show his bride to the salt-merchant and his wife.

The king laughed and gave his consent.

Then Cueran started, and he took with him Argentile and the two scullion boys.

Now they were very well received by the old people, who were delighted with their new daughter. And when Cueran and his brothers had gone to see the salt-pans, she said to the old man and woman, "I want you to speak to me the truth, and tell me who my husband is. If you will do that, I will tell you who I am. When he is asleep, there is a flame in his mouth, and when he dreams, the flame travels about, and where it goes, his thoughts go also. I am sure he is not what he thinks and says, any more than I am what you suppose and the king gave out."

Then the old couple looked at each other, and presently the woman said, "The truth must come out. It is true that Cueran is not our son. He is the son of a king in Denmark who is dead, and he has lost his inheritance."

"And I," said Argentile, "I am the daughter of the King of the East Saxons, and am deprived of my inheritance."

Now, when the young men came in, Argentile was very desirous that her husband should sail for Denmark and try to recover his kingdom, for now she saw what her dream really meant. The bear was Cueran's father, the foxes were the lords and vassals. The boar was the upstart king who reigned in his room. The tree into which Cueran climbed was the ship, and the sea had really carried him to the Lincolnshire shore. Then, surely, the dream foretold that he would regain what had been lost.

Now the salt-merchant and his wife went to their chests, and they brought out fine clothes that had been saved from the wreck, and they clothed Cueran and the princess, and they put on their two sons fitting garments.

They bought a ship, and Cueran sailed away in it with the princess and with the two young men as his attendants.

They arrived in Denmark, and as the ship was laden with merchandise, they unloaded it, and Cueran and his wife went to the town to lodge.

Now in that town lived Sigurd, who had been seneschal to King Gunter, and had amassed great riches, but, after the fall of Gunter, he had served the new king, whose name was Odulf. But so also had most of the great men of the land, even as, in

Argentile's dream, the foxes had fawned on the wild boar.

As it fell out, Sigurd invited Cueran, who was Havelock, to stay at his house.

Now it was told King Odulf that a merchantman had come to the town with a very beautiful wife, so he gave orders to his men to go and carry off this fair wife. He would see her, and, if she was as fair as was said, keep her for himself, as his own wife was dead, and cut off the head of the merchant.

Then one evening, when all were at supper in the house of Sigurd, in rushed the servants of King Odulf, and they seized on Argentile, and tried to carry her off. But Havelock snatched down an axe which was hanging against the wall, and fell on those who were bearing away his wife. Yet he was not so speedy but that Sigurd was wounded, and several of his men. He pursued the servants of the king into the street. Three men he killed, two he wounded to the death, and he hewed off the hand of the man who had laid hold of Argentile.

Then he took refuge with his wife and his servants in a church; and he shut the doors and ascended the tower and rang the bells.

The King of Denmark urged on his men to besiege the church, to kill Cueran, and to capture Argentile. But Havelock and his foster-brothers and servants threw down stones and tiles, and defended themselves valiantly, and the king called off his men, after he had lost several more.

Now Sigurd, who, though wounded, had looked on, was much perplexed in mind, for he did not think this young man could be a merchant, as his behaviour was that of a prince; moreover, he was in face much like his old master, King Gunter; so, when the assault had ceased, he made those who had been besieged in the church come to his mansion.

When they were there, Sigurd inquired of Cueran who he was, what his name might be, and who his companions were. Of the lady he asked whence she came, and who were her parents.

"Sir," said Cueran, who was also Havelock, "I know not who I am. I know that I was born in this country; a mariner, whose name was Grim, took me away when an infant. When on the high seas we were attacked by pirates, by whom we were badly treated. Then we were cast by a storm on the coast of Lincoln, at a place called Grimsby. The good man to whom the ship belonged and his wife nourished me; much they regarded and tended me. Then I went and served a king, and I was cook in his kitchen. There I was given this lady to be my wife, and she is his relation. She is very dear to me, and I am very much beloved by her. I came to this country, but I know none of my friends. I knew not with certainty if I had any relatives here. When I was in Denmark, I was called Havelock; when in England, I am called Cueran. You may call me as pleases you, by one name or the other."

Sigurd stood and listened. He well remembered the son of Gunter, and he knew that he bore that very name of Havelock. He remembered another circumstance—when he saw him in his cradle as an infant, a flame came out of his mouth. But he said nothing. He promised to set guards round the house, and he spread the report that the merchant and his wife had retired to their ship, and had put out to sea.

Now, in the night, when Havelock was asleep, Sigurd stole into the bedroom to look, and there was the flame playing about the mouth of the sleeping man. Then he made quite sure he was the son of his old master, King Gunter.

Then he sent for his people, he sent for his knights, for townsmen, and for foot soldiers. Many came from all parts. When he had assembled a large number, he went to speak to Havelock. He caused him to wash and eat. He had him dressed in splendid robes of cloth of silver, and he brought him into the hall. When Havelock entered the hall and saw so many armed men assembled, he thought some treachery was designed, and that they would fall upon him. He made a spring at an axe which a youth was holding.

Then Sigurd said, "Do not fear, my friend. I assure you I love you more than I did yesterday when you were sitting at my table."

Then he brought forth the ivory horn of King Gunter. Under heaven there had never yet been a knight who could sound this horn, and it was said that never would that horn sound again till the true king of Denmark had appeared. The upstart King Odulf had often tried to sound the horn, but had as often failed, and the people of Denmark knew well that therefore he was not their right king.

Sigurd now took the horn and tried to sound.

He could not do so; and he handed it to a knight.

"Whoever shall blow this horn that it sound," said he, "I will give a golden ring that is worth a castle. He who shall wear that ring will never be drowned, even though he should fall into the sea; nor will he be burned, even though he should fall into the fire. That is what is said of the ring."

Everyone now pressed forward to try the horn; but none could sound it, much or little. Then they delivered it to the young man Havelock. When he held it, he looked at it, and said that he had never blown a horn. He said, "I will let it be. As no one else can sound it, and some are great knights and mighty huntsmen, I am not likely to succeed, as I am but a cook."

"No," said Sigurd; "you also must put the horn to your mouth."

"Sir," said Havelock, "to please you I will do it, though I am sure I shall fail."

Then he took up the horn and placed it against his lips; and directly the horn touched his lips, it sounded as loud and shrilly and merrily as when his father blew it. And all were greatly astonished.

Then Sigurd clasped Havelock in his arms. "Now," said he, "I have found my rightful lord; now I have him whom I have desired, and for whom I will fight. This is the lawful heir, and he who should wear the crown of gold."

And all in the hall swore their allegiance and did homage. All the barons of the kingdom were sent for, and when they heard his story, and how he sounded the horn, they received him as their lord. When this was done, the people assembled. In four days there were many hundreds. In five days there were thirty thousand. Then they defied King Odulf; and there was a battle fought on a plain. Havelock gained the victory. All men came to him, suing for pardon and swearing fealty. The knights of the kingdom, the chief men and townsmen, made him their lord and king.

Then he held a great feast and merrymaking. He afterwards summoned all his ships, with all the power of the realm.

With this great host he passed the sea, and defied King Edelsi. He sent him word that he challenged him if he would not restore the rightful inheritance of his wife.

King Edelsi sent back answer that he would fight with him; he sent him all the saucepans, and kettles, and toasting forks, and ladles out of the palace kitchen, and said that these were the weapons suitable for a cook.

Then a great battle was fought that lasted till evening; and many men on both sides were slain. Black night came on, and settled down on the combatants; and the issue of the battle was deferred till the next day.

Now, by the counsel of Queen Argentile, a thing was done that proved of great success. Indeed, as men were flocking out to the assistance of King Edelsi, it seemed that on the morrow the Danes would be outnumbered.

During the night, the Danes, by Argentile's advice, cut down trees and made posts, and planted these posts in long rows. Then they took up the bodies of the dead men, the soldiers who had been slain the previous day, and they tied them to the posts; and they armed them with kitchen-ladles and toasting-forks and cleavers, and some had cauldrons and kettles on their heads, and some the covers of fish-kettles on their arms as shields, and fish-slices as swords; in a word, the dead men were all erect, and armed with the spoils of the kitchen that King Edelsi had sent in mockery.

Then, during the night, King Havelock and his men decamped from their former position and made a circuit, and came to the rear of the army of the English men of Norfolk and Lincoln.

Now, when the sun arose, King Edelsi sent spies to observe the enemy.

And as these spies drew near, they were filled with terror, for they saw rank on rank of dead men standing up, all armed with kitchen utensils. They were so frightened, that they ran back and said to King Edelsi that all the dead cooks and scullions of every age from the creation of the world had risen from their graves to fight for and maintain the right of the only cook who, in all the course of the world's history, had laid claim to a crown.

Edelsi was uneasy, but he bade sound the advance, and the army of the English advanced.

But when they came in sight of the host of dead men prepared to meet them with kitchen utensils as their weapons of warfare, their hair stood on end, and they trembled. At that same moment, Havelock and his Danes charged from the rear, and the discomfiture was complete. The Norfolk and Lincoln men threw down their arms and sued for peace.

All the kingdom of the East Saxons was restored to Queen Argentile.

King Havelock held a great festival at Colchester, and received the homage of his barons.

King Edelsi only lived five days after this. He had no heirs. His children were dead. So his nobles willingly agreed that Havelock and his wife should have the land of King Edelsi. So he had it; and he reigned as king for twenty years; and nothing more is recorded in English history of the events of the reign of King Havelock, save that he was very particular about his victuals, and liked everything sent up to table to be very well cooked; for indeed he knew how things should be done, having been a cook himself. And Havelock is believed to have been the first and last king who had been a cook.

NOTE.—The story of Havelock is one of the most ancient of our sagas, so ancient that it has passed away out of our nurseries, and has been clean forgotten. It exists, however, in several versions. The old English lay of Havelock is one of the few poems that have happily been recovered, after having long been given up as lost. It was at length discovered by accident in a manuscript belonging to the Bodleian Library, which had been catalogued as a Collection of Lives of the Saints. It was edited by Sir F. Madden, in 1828, for the Roxburghe Club, and has since been re-edited by the Rev. Walter W. Skeat for the Early English Text Society, 1868. A French "Lai de Aveloc" exists, which was composed within the first half of the twelfth century. The story was abridged by Gaimar in his English Chronicle, and he wrote between 1141 and 1151. There are numerous other references to the tale in other historians, all of which will be found in Mr. Skeat's edition.

The story varies very considerably in the several versions, and Havelock's wife is variously called Argentile or Goldburgh, and the several kings who are named in the tale also differ.

That Havelock was an historical character is more than probable, and Mr. Skeat fixes his date as somewhere in the 6th century. Mr. Haigh in his *Conquest of Britain by the Saxons*, 1861, gives these dates: Havelock's father slain, A.D. 487; his expedition to Denmark, A.D. 507; his reign in East Anglia, A.D. 511–531 or a little later. The story was converted into a ballad by Warner in his *Albion's England*, published in 1586; or what is more probable is that he took a current ballad and rewrote and spoiled it. That was what rhymesters did at that period. The Scots preserved the early ballads intact, our English rhymesters vulgarised them in rewriting them, to suit the false taste of the day, and so the old ballads on which they were based got lost.

As not only the names but the incidents vary in the several versions of the tale, I have rewritten it; and hope sincerely I have not done what I am complaining that the ballad-mongers did at the close of the reign of Elizabeth and in that of James I.; but if so, my version may go into the fire. The old lays have happily been preserved and published.

Finally, the seal of the town of Grimsby, which dates from the thirteenth century, represents Grim with Havelock on one side of him and Goldburgh (Argentile) on the other.

No point can be made out of the fact of the hero Sir Henry Havelock having been derived from Lincolnshire, as showing more than that a personal name continued to be used in that part of England and was adopted as a surname, and there is no more likelihood of blood relationship than that all "Williams" in England should be lineal descendants of William the Conqueror, or all Peters and Simons should be the offspring of the chief of the apostles.

XI

THE MAN WITH THE BELL

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THE MAN WITH THE BELL

In the vale of the Ouse, long, long ago, lived a great man called Buern Buzecarle.

One day he was sitting feasting in his hall, when he and those with him heard a little bell ring, and straightway through the door came an old blind man, ringing a small bell he held in his hand.

Now there was a bench across the hall, and as the old man came in direct, he fell over the bench and sprawled on the floor.

Thereat Buern Buzecarle and all his men broke out into laughter.

The blind man picked himself up, and Buern bade his servants give him some meat off the table, and some ale from their drinking horns.

The blind man said, "Buern Buzecarle, shall I say what I see?"

"Then," said Buern, "you will keep silence, for you see nothing."

"I see," said the blind man, "that you are going a far journey, to lose the Pearl of Humber. And then, because you have lost the pearl, you will throw away everything else you have, the box in which was the pearl, and the chamber in which was the box, and the house in which was the chamber, and the land on which was the house, and Northumbria in which is your land."

"You see this, do you?" asked Buern, laughing.

"Yes, I do," answered the blind man.

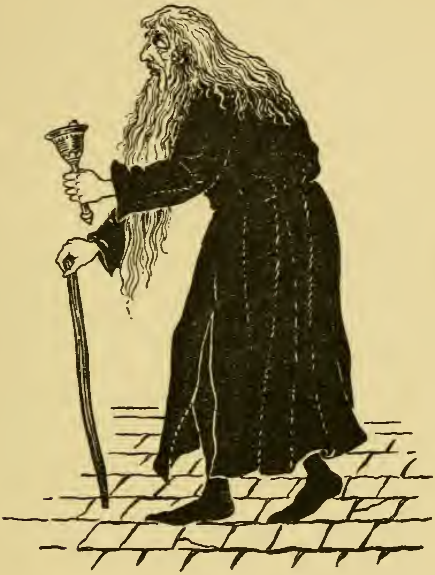
"If you could not see the bench that was before your nose, how can you foresee that which may never come to pass."

"The blind can see what is hid from seeing eyes," answered the man with the bell, "and the seeing eyes discern that to which the dark eyes are blind."

Now Buern Buzecarle had got a pearl, the finest pearl that ever was seen. It had been got out of the Humber, and it was as large as a hen's egg, and it shone like the moon in the dark. Nothing that Buern had got did he value so highly as the Pearl of Humber; for other men had houses and lands, and horses and hawks, and servants, but he alone in all England had the pearl.

That was quite true which the man with the bell had said, even that he was going away.

He was going to Germany about merchandise. What the blind man had said stuck in his thoughts, and he put away the pearl in a strong iron case, and the case he put in a strong stone chamber at the bottom of the tower, and he gave the three keys to his wife, that she should keep the pearl safe whilst he was away. But he did more. On top of the box he set an iron cock, and if anyone touched the box, the cock would peck out his eyes. And in front of the chamber he set an iron dog with steel teeth, and if anyone came to the door the dog would bite his legs and crush the bones. And in front of the tower he set an iron man, so that if anyone came to the tower, the iron man would swing about a great mace set with steel knives, and would pound and cut the intruder to pieces.



Then the wife of Buern Buzecarle said to him, " But how will you be able to get to the pearl when you want it? Will not the iron man beat and cut you? And if you escape the iron man, will not the dog crunch your leg bones? And if you escape the iron dog, will not the iron cock peck out your eyes?"

Then her husband said, "No, because I know the secret how to make them all still."

"What is that secret?" asked his wife.

"Nay, if I tell you, you will tell others."

"Indeed I will not. I see you do not love me, that you keep this secret from me."

So Buern told her.

Now Buern went on board ship and sailed away from England.

At this time the King of Northumbria was called Osbrith. Northumbria was at that time a very great kingdom; it reached from the Humber to the Firth of Forth, and the capital city was York. There King Osbrith held his court.

Osbrith was a very proud man, and he bade a goldsmith make him a crown, for he desired to be crowned king in York Minster. He gave the goldsmith all kinds of jewels to set in the crown.

The man said that he wanted one for the top that would be larger than, and would outshine, the rest. But the king had no more.

Then the goldsmith said, "It is a pity that the king has not Buern's Pearl of the Humber, for that would suit the crown admirably, and be a very crown of beauty to the crown itself."

When Osbrith heard this, he considered within himself and said that, as the pearl came out of the Humber, it ought to belong to him; and that it was not right that one of his men should have a finer jewel than himself, their king.

So he sent to Buern's house to bid him come to him at York. But Buern was away.

Then the king considered that he must have the pearl shortly, for he was soon to be crowned, and he would be ashamed to have the crown put on his head without a goodly jewel at the top; and no other jewel would do for him but the pearl that Buern possessed.

So he sent messages to the wife of Buern Buzecarle to say that he would buy the pearl.

She sent back word that she could not sell it, as her husband valued it above all he possessed.

Then the king sent men to take the pearl. But they came back and said it was fast behind three keys, and that the lady kept the keys, and could in no way be persuaded to give them up.

The king was very angry, and he rode himself into Ousedale to see Buern's lady.

And when he saw her, he asked for the keys. She refused them to the king. Then he ordered his men to bring in a block and an axe, and he said he would have her head cut off unless she surrendered the keys.

You may be sure she was in a dreadful fright, and she gave the three keys to the king.

Now, when Osbrith and his men came to the tower, they saw that they were not advanced greatly, for at the tower gate stood the iron man, and he swung about his mace set with steel knives, and no one could come near to the door.

Osbrith was very angry, and he returned to the lady, and he said, "Make a great fire in the kitchen, and tie the lady to the spit, and turn her round and round and roast her till she tells me how we may get into the tower, past the iron man."

So the servants bound the lady, and tied her to the spit, and made the spit turn before a roaring fire. First it singed her silken dress. Then the fire singed her hair, and when it began to burn her flesh, she screamed that she would tell.

They unbound her, and she said: "If you would pass the iron man, you must roll up to him a barrel of tallow and a ball of tow."

This, accordingly, the king's men did, and the iron man beat about with his iron mace, and first he struck into the barrel, and all the tallow came out and got about his mace, and then he struck at the ball of tow, and the tow came out and became tangled in the knives and spikes of his mace, and, because of the tallow, stuck to them; and when he swung his arm, the tow came after the mace, and he banged again at the barrel, and more tallow came, and then next at the ball, and more tow came, and ever the tangle of tallow and tow became thicker about his mace, till at last it made a great ball like a huge silkworm's cocoon, and could do no man any harm whom it touched.

Now, when the king and his men saw this, they rushed to the door, and thrust over the iron man with his muffled mace, and put the key to the lock and entered.

Then they reached the chamber door, before which lay the iron dog. It got up and snarled, and showed its steel teeth, so that no man might come near.

The king went back to the house, and he ordered all the cobwebs in the country round to be collected, and he had the lady wrapped up in them, and he said she should be tickled to death by spiders, unless she told him how he could pass the iron dog.

She bore the discomfort for a while. First the spiders ran about in her hair. Then they ran over her hands. But when one ran to catch a fly across her lips, she screamed out that she would tell. So the king's servants took off the cobwebs and set her free.

Then she said, "My sister at Ripon has got a cook who is so clever that whatever she cooks she turns to leather, that no one can eat it. Get this cook to make a beefsteak pudding and throw it to the dog."

Thereupon Osbrith sent for the accomplished cook who was at Ripon, and who was so clever as to cook food that was good in such a manner that nobody could eat it.

She arrived with a herald blowing a trumpet before her, and everyone watched whilst she made a beefsteak pudding.

Now, when the pudding was done, it was carried into the tower and thrown before the iron dog. The dog snapped at it, and his teeth went in through the dough that was heavy as lead, into the meat that was tough as leather, and he could not withdraw them. He tumbled about with his mouth shut on the inedible beefsteak pudding, and was thenceforth harmless. So the king and his men passed the dog and unlocked the chamber door, and they saw within the casket in which was the pearl, and on it stood an iron cock ready to peck out the eyes of anyone who drew near.

When the king saw this, he went back to the house, and he said, "Throw the lady into the eel-pond, and let her remain there till she tells me how to prevent the cock from pecking."

Accordingly the lady was cast into the pond, and the eels began to wriggle about her. One crawled up her sleeve. Then one wound round her throat. But when another tried to get in at her ear, so as to crawl through her head and out at the other, she screamed out that she would tell.

So King Osbrith drew her from the pond; and she stood shivering and dripping before him, and said, "The cock only pecks because he is not himself henpecked. At Scarborough is a hen with an adamantine beak, that is crooked. Send for that hen, and all your trouble about the cock will be at an end."

Then King Osbrith sent to Scarborough, and the hen with the crooked adamantine beak was brought. And as soon as she entered the house, the cock began to crow. And when she was brought into the chamber, she flew to the top of the box, and for a while the king was quite disappointed, because the cock began to plume her wings, and she to rub her beak against his, and Osbrith did not think that he would get at the lock. But this fondling continued only for a few minutes, and then sharp came a little peck from the hen. The cock gave a discontented crow, and then the hen pecked again and again. She hopped about the cock, and pecked his neck and his comb and under his wings, wherever she thought her beak could give most pain. She had a wonderful insight as to what were his most sensitive parts. Then the iron cock danced about in torture, and had no thoughts for anything but how he might protect himself from the pecks of the hen. Rust came out all over him—which is the blood of iron—and ran in streams from his heart, where the beak of the hen struck deepest.

Then the king got to the lock, turned the key, and carried off the pearl, and had it set in his crown, and wore it when crowned in York Minster.

But the lady mourned much over the loss of the pearl, and she became quite colourless from the grief the loss caused her.

This was certain to be seen by her husband Buern on his return, who was very noble and gentle. Amidst all the merchants who traversed the sea, the king had not a better vassal; nor was there in the kingdom in which he was born one better descended.

When he returned, he wondered much to see his wife pale and feeble and thin, and to find her quite changed from what she was when he left her. He asked what had occurred, what her wan looks meant, and what had happened to her.

She replied to him, "I will tell you, and will even accuse myself; then administer to me the same justice which would be given to a robber if he were taken."

He said to her, "What has happened?"

She said, "The other day the king came here, and he demanded the Pearl of Humber, and I told him where it was, and gave him up the keys, and told him how to make harmless the iron man, and the iron dog, and the iron cock."

Then Buern said, "I know very well that you did none of this willingly."

Then she told him all—how she had been roasted, and how she had been covered with cobwebs, and how she had been thrown into the eel-pond. And when she had done, she fell at his feet and said, "I am ready to die. I would rather die than live."

He said, "Rise, my beloved. You shall not be hated for this. Feebleness could do nothing against force. There is a very goodly disposition in you. As you have first revealed this to me, I shall pity you greatly; but if you had concealed it from me, so that another had discovered it to me, never would my heart have loved you, nor my lips have kissed you. Since, however, the king has behaved as a common felon, he shall suffer as a felon."

Next morning he rode to York.

He found the king amongst his people. Buern had many powerful relations there.

The king saw him and saluted him. But Buern threw his glove in his face and said, "I defy thee, and I restore thee all the land thou didst give to me, and all the honour thou didst confer on me; and here I return to thee all the homage due for land and honour."

With this he went to his house, and many noble barons accompanied him.

Then he held a council with his kinsfolk and friends, and told them how the king, like a common felon, had broken into his house whilst he was away, and had robbed him of the Pearl of the Humber.

They advised that he should demand it back again from the king.

But when Osbrith heard that Buern asked to have the jewel restored, he scoffed, and said, "Shall I despoil my crown of its finest jewel for this merchant fellow?"

Then it was that Buern, with wrath in his heart, mounted his ship and sailed to Denmark, and invited the Danes to come and avenge his great wrong.

Whilst he was away, Osbrith so oppressed the people that many of them left him, and they set up a brave man, Ella, to be their king, and Osbrith was followed by a very few, but he remained in possession of York.

Now the Danes, when they landed, arrived at Cawood, near York, and other ships ran ashore in Holderness. They swarmed over the country, pillaging and spoiling, and there was a battle fought near York, and the English were defeated, and King Osbrith was slain.

Then Buern Buzecarl said to the Danes, "You have avenged my wrong; return to your own homes."

But they laughed him in the face, and answered, "We hearkened to your call. We are deaf to what you now say. We shall go when we like—and perhaps not go at all."

Then Buern remembered what the blind man with the little bell had said, and he was very sorrowful.

Now it happened one day, about this very time, that King Ella was hunting, and he had been very successful, he had killed four wild white oxen.

He was seated in his hall at dinner after the chase, when he heard a bell ring, and there came in at the door a blind man, and in his hand was a bell, and this he rang as he walked along.

The king bade him come forward and have meat from the dishes and ale from the horns. So the blind man began to eat and drink.

Whilst he was eating and drinking, King Ella said to one of his knights, "We have done well to-day; we have slain four wild oxen and six deer. Many a time have we had worse sport."

The blind man, who sat at a distance, heard him; then he stood up and said, "If you have taken so much in the wood, you have lost more in the land. The Danes have been hunting; they have taken York, they have killed many barons, and Osbrith is slain."

Ella said, "How can you know that?"

The man with the bell said, "The blind can see in some things farther than the seeing."

"I will not believe this without some token."

"This is the token," answered the blind man: "the horn in your hand shall spill all its contents, and the ring on your finger fall into your plate, and the crown on your head lie low on the floor."

When he had said that, the horn split from end to end, and all the wine in it was poured out, red as blood, on the table. Also the king's gold ring snapped in twain; and, as he started up, his crown fell off and rolled away on the floor.

Then said the blind man, "I can see what is going on afar, and I can also see what must come to pass. There will be a great battle, which you will lose, and in it will go your crown and your life. Therefore, if you will be advised, go not into it."

"Give me also a token that this is true," said Ella.

Then said the blind man, "Orn, the son of my sister, who attends on me, and stands now behind me, will be the first to die in the great battle which will lose you kingdom, crown, and life."

"I can easily make sure that this does not come to pass," said Ella, and he bade his guards take the young man Orn and shut him up in a high tower, and not allow him to leave it, but to retain him till his return from fighting against the Danes.

Then he said to the blind man with the bell, "If I come back victorious, then I will have you hung."

"I am content," said the blind man. "But I see very well that I shall not die on the gallows."

Now news soon arrived that York had been captured by the Danes, and that King Osbrith was dead as the blind man had said. People came to Ella from every quarter, and he soon had a large army, at the head of which he marched south to meet the Danes.

I must tell you that the young man Orn was in the tower, and he saw the armed men marching by, and heard the trumpets call, and he was very impatient to be in the battle. He could not endure to be a prisoner in the tower when all the brave men of the country were arming against the invaders. But the guards would not suffer him to leave. So he got two shields, very large and light, and he put his arms through them and jumped off the tower, and, by using the shields as wings, he saved himself, and came to the ground without breaking his neck or legs or arms.

Then he saw a horse, which he quickly took. A man was holding the horse, and this man had three spears in his hand. Orn snatched two of them from him and rode away in the direction of York. He rode and rode, and did not desist till he reached the king's army, before the troops were mustered. Within himself, like a foolish youth, he determined that he would strike the first blow.

So he went forward, and, as the Danes advanced, he threw one of his spears, and it entered the mouth of a Danish chief and came out behind his neck, and the body fell lifeless. It could not do otherwise. Orn then threw his second spear, and it entered the breast of another Dane and went through his heart, and the body fell lifeless. It could not do otherwise.

Orn had now spent his two spears, and he had advanced before the Northumbrian line to throw them. Now he turned to go back. But at that moment a Danish archer let fly an arrow, and it pierced the young man, so that he fell dead, and he was the first who was slain in this battle under the walls of York, as the blind man had said.

King Ella, when he knew this, felt in his heart a grief which he had never felt before. He cried out with boldness, and pierced through two of the ranks of the enemy; he was as one beside himself.

The Danes were on all sides. Ella the king was slain, and few of his men escaped.

The Danes did not rest till they had taken all the land. They took from Buern Buzecarle his house and all that he had, and the whole kingdom of Northumbria. So the words of the blind man with the bell came true.

NOTE.—The story of "Buern Buzecarle" is in Gaimar's Chronicle of England, written between 1141 and 1151, and is clearly taken from a ballad. This *lai* has been unfortunately lost. One incident in it I have had to modify or alter, for reasons which will be obvious to any one who reads the original. There are two versions of the story of the coming of the Northmen to England: one is given in the story of King Edmund, the other is told here. What is certain is that the Danes began to come in Ethelred's time, when Edmund was king in East Anglia, and Ella was king in Northumberland. The King of Northumberland had been Osbrith, but he had been deposed, and Ella, who was not of royal birth, set up in his place. The Danes arrived in East Anglia in 866, passed the winter there, and next year crossed the Humber into what is now Yorkshire, and was then part of the kingdom of Northumbria. They took York in the same year, 867; there actually was then a great battle fought, and King Osbrith the dethroned and Ella the usurper made up their differences and fought the Danes under its walls, were defeated, and both slain. Consequently, we can fix the date of the events in this story with a nicety, and we know that both Ella and Osbrith were real historical characters, and that this story is based on historical traditions.

XII

THE STORY OF CADWALLON

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ALACK and alack-a-day! The Saxons and the Angles and the Jutes had ravaged poor Britain. They had burned the cities, and destroyed the churches, and those men and women and children whom they had not massacred, they had reduced to be their bondslaves.

King Vortigern had invited them over to help the Britons against the Picts and Scots, and these Germans had found Britain so fair and fertile, that they had settled in the good land and made it their own. Yet was it not altogether their own. Still the brave Britons maintained a desperate resistance, and contested every inch of land, and still these Germans brought in fresh hordes from the desolate sand and heath-grown flats of Northern Germany and Jutland. The Britons had none to call to their aid, for their kinsmen in Brittany were also in great straits, and hard pressed.

Now this is the story of the last gallant struggle made by the Britons.

North of the Humber ruled a chief of the Angles, named Ethelfrid, who was a heathen, and a ferocious enemy of the British. He had a wife, but he was unkind to her, and at last drove her away, and she went in the heaviness of her heart to Cadwan, King of the Britons, so that probably she was a British lady; and then, when Ethelfrid had got rid of her, he married a great stout German Frau.

The wife of Ethelfrid remained at the court of Cadwan, and was much loved by the queen.

Now it fell out that much about the same time the banished wife of Ethelfrid became the mother of a little son, and so also did the wife of Cadwan. Then the first was called Edwin, and the British prince was named Cadwallon.

The two boys grew up together,and played together, and were great friends, almost as if they were brothers.

Now, when both had grown to be fine youths, the King Cadwan sent them both to Brittany, to King Solomon, who reigned there, that they might be instructed in all the knowledge of the time, and be taught to be brave and honourable and true.

King Solomon received them very kindly, and he did all that was asked of him, and the youths fought by his side, and did valiantly in some of his battles.

At length, in course of time, good King Cadwan died, and so also did the Angle chief, Ethelfrid; and each youth started to return to Britain, Cadwallon to be king and Edwin to be chief.

Now, as they were in the boat, sailing over the blue sea, and the gulls were hovering over their heads, and the sail was full spread, and the waves foamed up before the bows, the two youths stood in the fore part of the ship, and looked towards the land whence they first came, to which they were returning.

Then said Edwin, "Cousin, you rule over the British, and I rule over the Angles. You wear a crown, why should not I?"

Then Cadwallon, without much thought, answered and said, "Ay, cousin, wear a gold crown if so you list."

Now it fell out that after they had parted, and Cadwallon was going through his kingdom, that his heart grew sad and angry at the sight of the havoc wrought by the Angle and Saxon invaders. He came to Bangor, near Chester, and there saw blackened ruins where had once been a great monastery, where the holy men sat in ranges with gold harps, and harped and sang the praises of God all in the British tongue. But Ethelfrid had come there, and a great battle had been fought in the apple orchards there in the year 607, and Ethelfrid had defeated the Britons, and had murdered all the monks in the famous monastery, to the number of twelve hundred. For Ethelfrid had said, "What are these old men in white doing? they are praying their God to defeat us?" So they had all been put to the sword.

Along with Cadwallon went his nephew Brian, and as the day was hot, and the king was weary, Cadwallon sat down beside a river, and laid his head on his nephew's lap and fell asleep.

Now Brian had not lived out of Britain, as had his uncle, and he thought how that Cadwallon had granted to Edwin the right to wear a crown, and how that Edwin was the son of the cruel ravager, Ethelfrid. And when he thought on all this, he wept, and his tears fell down and dropped on his uncle's face. Cadwallon was disturbed in his sleep by the tears, and half asleep and half awake, he said, " It rains ! how it rains ! "

Then he opened his eyes and saw that the sky was clear and blue. Then he said, " This is strange. There has been a shower, and the sun is shining. Where is the rainbow ? "

Then Brian said, " Uncle, you have put it on the head of Edwin."

Now Cadwallon looked in his nephew's face and saw that his eyelashes were heavy with tears, and he asked him what he meant.

Thereupon Brian said, " h, uncle and king, hitherto these cruel invaders who have spoiled and taken our land have been but robber chiefs, and captains savage, and rulers over savages. But they have not quite forgotten that they are intruders, and none hitherto have called themselves kings. Now, what have you done but to break the British crown in half, and give half the golden hoop to the son of the man who wasted your land and slew the saints of God."

When Cadwallon heard what was said, he was sore troubled and ashamed. He set his teeth hard, and before he raised his head from the lap of Brian, he had resolved to make one desperate struggle to free the fair land of Britain from the foreigners who had spread over it.

Then he stood up. Now there was growing near a great number of dog-daisies. Cadwallon plucked them, and made of them a wreath, and put it round the head of Brian, and said, " Follow me." So he led him to the ruins of Bangor, and took thence a stake that was burnt at one part, and at the other stained with the blood of the holy martyrs. He bade Brian take this piece of wood and lay it before Edwin, and say to him, " This will I avenge on thee and thy people." But because of the white dog-daisies round his head, a token that he was a messenger, Edwin would not venture to lay hands on him.

Thereat Brian rejoiced greatly, and he went cheerfully on his way, nor halted till he came to the city of York. There he entered as the messenger ot King Cadwallon, and went before Edwin.

Then, lo! he saw the Angle chief in his high seat, wearing a crown on his head.

Thereat Brian waxed wroth, and he went up to him, and with the charred stick he took it off his head, put it on his arm, and, throwing the burnt stick at the foot of the astonished prince, cried out, " This will Cadwallon, the great king, the Pendragon, revenge on thee and thine."

And so he ran forth, carrying the crown, and none stayed him, for all were amazed at what he had done. Moreover, he drew his cloak about him, and concealed the gold crown he bore.

Then King Cadwallon sent messengers throughout the land to summon the Britons to meet him and prepare for battle.

Edwin also made ready. But he was a subtle man, and he resolved to obtain help in other ways than by arms. So he sent and fetched to him a Spanish magician, whose name was Pellitus, and asked his assistance.

Pellitus promised it. He must have the swords and axes wherewith the blessed martyrs at Bangor had been slain, as well as the gold of their harps that had been carried away. This must all be mixed with tears of widows and orphans, and the whole smelted with wood that came from dead men's biers. Then Pellitus promised to make thereof a magic mirror which would show to Edwin all that Cadwallon did.

It was not hard to obtain the ingredients, as there were many orphans and widows who wept daily their losses in the cruel wars carried on by Ethelfrid, and the swords and axes were in the hands of the mighty men of the court, and the gold harps in the treasury.

So Pellitus worked, and in time ran out the molten metal, and fashioned therefrom a great mirror. Now, whenever Edwin looked into the mirror, he could see what Cadwallon was doing, how he was arranging his army, and what were the forces under his command.

But this did not suffice the Angle prince. He sent and brought to him three old witches with beards like men and nails like the claws of birds. And the thing that these old women could do was to bake, boil, and brew storms. One baked thunderbolts, and one boiled till out of her cauldron rose clouds charged with hail and snow and rain, and the third brewed winds. He set these three women in a tower of his castle at York, and the king looked every day into his magic mirror.

When he saw that Cadwallon was coming with his army along a difficult way, then he went with his host against him, and caught him stretched in extended line, and cut his army in half. And when he saw that Cadwallon was on the alert, and prepared for battle, then he kept away; but so soon as his mirror told him that the army of the Britons was resting and relaxing its discipline, then he came down on it from all quarters, and cut it to pieces.

Moreover, when the forces of the Northumbrians and of the Britons met on a plain, then he set his witches to work, and they made furious storms; thunderbolts and hail were flung out of the clouds against Cadwallon, and such a furious gale drove in the faces of the Britons that it beat back their armies, and gave double force to those of the Northumbrian foreigners.

Thus the Britons were defeated in several battles, and several of their cities were taken. Among these was Worcester, in which was Gwen, the sister of Brian and the niece of Cadwallon.

Then Edwin sent her to York to be made the handmaid of his queen, and he bade his wife use her roughly, and make her do the most menial work. Gwen was very gentle and meek, and she obeyed what was commanded, but she wept day and night, not only because she was a prisoner, but also because of the sorrows of the Britons, and the defeats of their king, Cadwallon.

At last Cadwallon was forced to fly out of Britain, and he took ships for Ireland. There he went about and urged the kings to come to his assistance. He represented to them that these rapacious Angles and Saxons would not rest content with having taken and ravaged Britain, but that they would next turn their attention to Ireland.

So Cadwallon was able to collect forces. But whenever he put to sea, then Edwin looked into his magic mirror and saw him, and set the three witches to brew and bake and boil, and send such storms that the ships were wrecked or driven back upon the Irish coast.

At length Cadwallon was almost in despair, and he resolved to cross over into Brittany and consult his good friend, King Solomon.

Now, just as before, Edwin looked in the glass, and saw Cadwallon starting with the remnant of his men. He ordered the sister witches to work, and they baked and boiled and brewed, and such a frightful tempest, with hail and thunderbolts and raging winds, broke over the deep, that the fleet of King Cadwallon was scattered, and nearly all the ships foundered with those on board. Owing to the fury of the sea, none of those who fell in could escape to land. The ship in which were Cadwallon and his nephew Brian was driven upon the coast of a barren isle, which I think was that of Ushant; and they had great difficulty in getting ashore, so furious were the breakers.

Cadwallon was so grieved at the loss of his companions and the failure of his hopes, that for three days and nights he lay on the turf and refused to eat.

The faithful Brian was sore troubled for his uncle, whose heart seemed to be broken. He went about the island seeking for food, but could find nought. The seafowl had all been disturbed by the gale. It was not the season for eggs. There were neither goats nor sheep on the islet. He tried to get sea shells and fish, but the waves still boiled and tumbled on the rocks, and he could find nothing. Nor were there any berries to be found. Nothing grew in the island but short grass.

Now, what do you suppose that Brian did when he saw how matters were?

He took his knife and cut out a slice from his own thigh, and lighted a fire and roasted the flesh thereat, and brought it to the king, and said it was venison.

Then Cadwallon raised himself and ate, nothing knowing what he ate. But when he had eaten, then the spirit revived within him, and he resolved to make an attempt to reach the mainland.

The wind had fallen, and he and Brian were able to get the ship afloat, and in it they were wafted over the strait to the coast of Brittany. Then they went before King Solomon, who received them very kindly; and when he heard of the state of affairs in Britain he promised his assistance.

So Solomon called together his council, and they consulted for three days. Then the king said to Cadwallon, "This is what we think. So long as Pellitus is by the side of Edwin, nothing can avail.

Moreover, no success can attend your arms so long as Edwin can look in the mirror and learn all your movements. This is our advice. You hunt, and play bowls, and eat and drink and royster. Then Edwin, looking in his glass, will see you making merry, and he will think that he has nothing more to fear."

Now the wood of Brocelind contained in it a great oak-tree, and in that oak-tree was the enchanter Merlin, who had so greatly assisted Uthyr Pendragon and King Arthur. He might never leave that tree, but it was said that in times of great distress to Britain, he might there be consulted.

This, then, was the advice given by the wise men of King Solomon, that Brian should go to the wood and call thrice upon Merlin by the tree, and ask his counsel. This accordingly was done, and Brian received answer that he must himself go and be the slayer of Pellitus, and that nothing would break the mirror of Edwin save a horse of brass made out of the sacring bells of the churches in Brittany.

When Brian heard this, then he went up and down through the land, and he told of the sorrows of Britain wherever he went; and in every church he asked for "the sacring bell,"—that is to say, the little hand-bell which is rung at the mass, for without that Britain could not be relieved. There was not a priest nor a congregation in all Brittany that was not willing to surrender its bell. So Brian came back to King Solomon with great store of bells of brass, and even some of silver.

Now King Solomon sent for a cunning worker in brass, and Brian told him all that in which he had been instructed by Merlin, and he cast a horse of a goodly size of the brass of the sacring bells. No sooner did the brass horse issue from the foundry, than he began to neigh and prance.

After that Brian made him a staff, and shod the staff with a sharp piece of steel at the end, and with this in his hand, and with the brass horse, he departed in a ship for the coast of Britain.

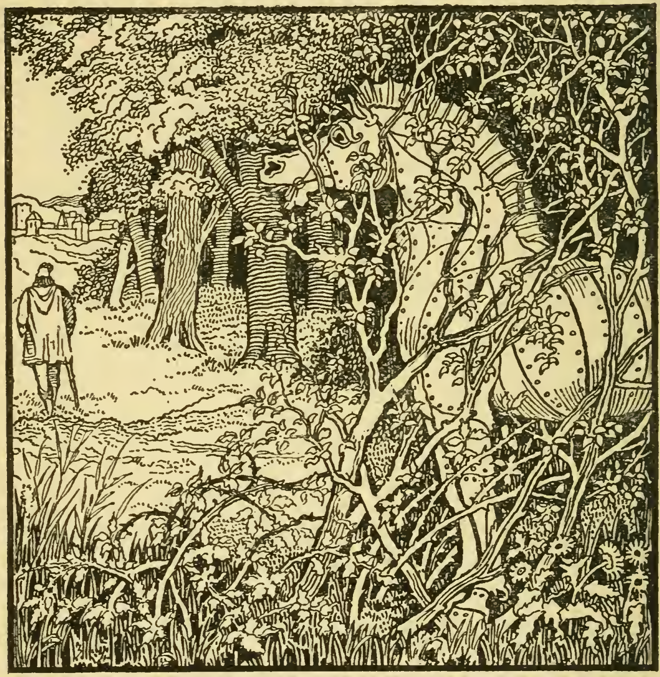
He had a good voyage. Edwin made no account of him. His glass told him that Cadwallon was that day playing a game of bowls. The glass told him nothing of the movements of Brian.

When Brian landed at Hamo's Port, which is now called Southampton, he rode the brass horse by night, and by day he covered it with boughs of trees and old clouts, that no man might see it, and none might report concerning it to Edwin, or to his magician Pellitus.

In this manner Brian rode till he reached a wood near to York, and there he concealed the horse, and covered it with branches of trees; and, in the habit of a beggar man holding his staff, he went on to York, and came outside the palace and stood among the beggars who waited daily for alms.

Now, as he thus stood, his sister came forth, having a basin in her hand, which she hasted to fill with fresh water for the queen. Brian went close by her, and whispered. She at once knew him, and could hardly restrain her tears by the fear she was in lest he should be discovered. He bade her try and meet him the next night at an old ruined church outside the walls, and he asked her to point out

Pellitus to him. This she did. She pointed with her finger to the magician, who had just issued from the door, bearing some alms for the beggars, sent them by Edwin.



Thereat Brian pressed through the crowd of paupers, and came close up to the magician, and plucked at his garment. Then Pellitus turned, and instantly Brian raised his staff and struck him in the breast with the sharp end, and transfixed him with it to the ground, and stepped back and disappeared among the beggars.

A great commotion and outcry ensued, and the gates of the city were ordered to be closed. But Brian had fled and hidden himself in the wood by the brazen horse. His sister was unable to come to him, so strict were the orders of Edwin that none should be allowed to pass the gates.

Brian waited till midnight, and then he went to his brazen horse, and patted him on the neck, and said, "Alas! good steed, what shall I do? The gates are fast, and the mirror is sound, and my sister is a prisoner."

At that moment the moon rose, and the brazen horse began to prance and to neigh. In a moment he started, and was gone. He galloped to the gates of York, and stood up on his hind legs and beat with his front hoofs against the gates, and broke them down. All the guards fled in panic, and he neighed, and his neigh was as the blast of a trumpet. Everyone fled before him. He went on to the tower where was kept the magic mirror, and he went in, and kicked the mirror and shattered it to pieces. Then he trotted up the great stair into the chamber of the ladies, and knelt down beside Gwen.

She thought that she had better commit herself to the brazen horse than remain a prisoner among the enemies of her people. So she sprang on the back of the horse, and he rose and trotted away with her, out of the palace, down the street of York, through the broken gate, and away, away to the wood where Brian was waiting.

Then Brian kissed his sister, and was right glad, and he rode along with her across the country till he came to Caer Wisc, or Exeter, and there he summoned all the Britons of the west to assemble and make a stand against the Saxons and Angles.

It must now be told that in Mid-Britain was the kingdom of Mercia, which consisted of the pagan Angles who had settled there. Their chief was named Penda, and he recognised the supreme authority of Edwin. Now, when Edwin of Northumbria heard that the Britons of the west had risen under Brian, he sent word to Penda to march against them. But, as it happened, in Mercia the great bulk of the people were Britons, and only the nobles were Germans. Moreover, Penda was jealous of Edwin, who was younger than he, and therefore he only reluctantly obeyed. He arrived before Exeter, and besieged it.

Meanwhile, however, Cadwallon had set sail at the head of a large body of men from Brittany, and as Edwin knew nothing of his proceedings now that the mirror was broken and his magician slain, he did not bid the three hags to send storms against him. Cadwallon landed, and advanced to the relief of Exeter at the head of ten thousand men. A skirmish with Penda ensued, and then the chief of the Mercians agreed to come to terms with Cadwallon, and unite forces with him, and march against Edwin.

When the Prince of Northumbria heard of this combination, he was greatly alarmed; he gathered together a large army, and hastened to oppose the British king and Penda.

A great battle was fought at Heathfield, on the south frontiers of Northumbria. That was a glorious victory for the Britons, for they utterly routed and cut to pieces the foreign invaders. Edwin fell, sword in hand, and almost all his people fell with him, together with his son Osfrid, and Godbold, King of the Orkneys, who had come to his assistance.

Having obtained this great victory, Cadwallon marched through Northumbria, driving out the aliens, and everywhere restoring the Britons to their own possessions.

So once more a British king held high court in London, and all Britain was subject to him.

When Cadwallon grew old, he bade his people when he died embalm his body and place it in brass on the brazen horse made out of the sacring bells in Brittany, and set him on the west gate of London, with his face turned to the western sun. And he said that so long as he thus sat on the brass horse, so long the Saxons should not prevail. And so it was. When he died, a figure was cast in his form and set on the brazen horse, that had never neighed nor moved since its work had been accomplished. And the figure of the king on horseback was erected where now stands St. Martin's Church.

Now it fell out that after some years, the people of London town said: "Of what use is that brazen image of a king on horseback? Let us melt and mint him, and then he will circulate as money." They did this. They melted the figure and minted it, and it became pennies. But after that the Saxons came, and seized on London, and there was never after a British king in the land. And if ever you chance on a bronze penny with on it the image of a horse and rider, be sure it is one made out of the statue of Cadwallon on his horse.

NOTE.—The story of Cadwallon, or Cadwallo, or Caedwalla, is given by Geoffry of Monmouth, and after him by Roger of Wendover, and Caradoc of Llancarvan. According to Bede, who was almost a contemporary, he died in 634. Bede, of course, vilifies the British hero, and glorifies the Northumbrian princes. The story in Geoffry of Monmouth is, of course, fabulous, but is based on fact, as we can see by the Saxon Chronicle, and by Bede. Geoffry took the Welsh legends, and, having no feeling for the poetry in them, did his best to spoil these legends. He introduces wretched discourses of great length into the interview between Cadwallon and Solomon of Armorica.

At the best the story is fragmentary, and I have taken the liberty of embroidering thereon. I have introduced the brazen horse earlier in the story than in Geoffry's History.

XIII

THE STORY OF KING EDMUND

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Long, long ago, in the kingdom of the Danes, there lived a certain man called Ragnar, and as he wore his breeches of hair that had been dipped in melted pitch, which dried and made it bristle, all hard and black, he went by the name of Lodbrog or Shaggy-breek.

Now I must tell you why Ragnar wore the shaggy breeks. There lived in Gothland a great earl, and he had an only child, a daughter, called Thora, very beautiful, and greatly loved by her father.

Every day when the earl went out hunting, if he saw anything pretty or curious, he brought it home for his daughter.

Now he had built her a house for herself in a sunny spot near a wood, and in it she and her maidens dwelt; and they hung the chambers all round with tapestry, and the roof was gilt, so that it shone just like the sun. One day the earl found in the forest the loveliest little snake, that glittered like a rainbow, and, like a rainbow, was of all colours. It was so small that he put it in his pocket, and when he gave it to Thora, she put it into an ashen chest near the fire, where it might be warm, and whence she could take it out to play with it whilst sitting by the fire.

She fed the snake with milk, a spoonful every day.

It grew and grew, and at last was too big for the chest, so it got out and lay before the fire, and would not allow the earl's daughter or her maidens to come near. It occupied the whole space before the fire.

Still she fed it with milk, and now it drank a jugful twice a day.

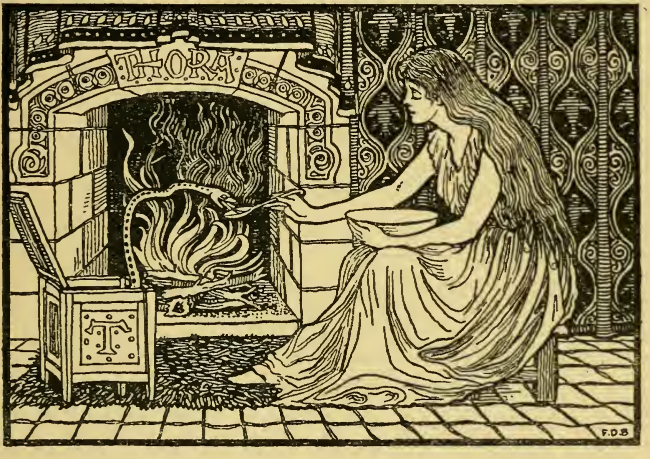
It grew and grew, and at last filled the whole room, so that the earl's daughter and her maids had to remain outside the door. But the appetite of the snake also grew, and it put forth its head at the window and hissed for milk.

She fed it with milk, and it drank all the milk a cow gave, and had to be fed four times a day.

It grew and grew, and the room was too small for it, so it slipped out of the window and curled itself round the house in which was the earl's daughter, and she could not get out at all, for now the serpent was very savage, and furious for milk; and if the earl had not driven up droves of cows every day for the snake to drink their milk, the horrible creature would have bitten off the heads of the earl's daughter and her maids, and have sucked their blood.

When the serpent was angry, he spat out venom that burned up the grass and trees, and if a spot of the venom fell on a man's hand, it went on burning through his flesh till it had reached the bone, and it burnt through that and killed the man; for he went all to pieces when his bones were burnt through.

The Earl of Gothland was in great distress, he did not know how to deliver his daughter. So he issued a proclamation that he would give her to be the wife of any man who could kill the serpent.



When the tidings reached Denmark, then Ragnar heard of the offer. But he said nothing, only he made himself long trousers of wild bull hair, and a sort of pilot coat also of hair, and he melted pitch and dipped the hair suit in it, and when the pitch was dry, he put on this curious suit, and everyone laughed and called him Hairy-breek.

Now, Ragnar was the son of a king, and he asked his father to give him a ship and some companions. The king agreed, and when Ragnar set sail, he steered in the direction of Gothland, which is an island in the Baltic.

One evening he arrived at Gothland, and ran his vessel into a little creek. Without saying anything to anyone, he took his spear, and put on his pitched hairy clothes, and walked in the direction of the mansion of Thora, the earl's daughter.

Before he came out of the wood, he sat down on a stone and knocked out the nail that fastened the head of his spear to the shaft. Then he went on, and presently he saw the serpent lying coiled round the house of the earl's daughter.

It smelt something strange,—it was the pitch of Ragnar's garments,—and lifted its hideous head.

Ragnar was not afraid. He came on, and flung his spear so that it drove right through the head of the creature and pinned it to the wall. The serpent, in dying, squirted forth a torrent of venom, which fell on Ragnar, but did him no harm, because he was protected by his tarry suit. Then he laid hold of the shaft of his spear, and left the head of it nailing the dead monster to the wall.

The earl was glad next morning, when he saw that the serpent was dead, and he asked of everyone who had done the great deed.

No one knew. One of his servants told him that a strange ship was anchored in a bay of the island, and he at once gave command that all on board should be brought to him, each with his spear.

Now, when they were brought, as he ordered, not one of the company would say he had killed the monster. So the earl made them produce their spears, and lo! all had the heads on except that of Ragnar, and Ragnar's shaft exactly fitted the head that had pierced the throat and backbone of the great serpent.

Then there was a grand feast and a merry wedding, and Ragnar Hairybreeks lived very happily with his wife, and by her had two sons, called Hingvar and Hubba, and he was declared heir to the earl, and he reigned after him in Gothland, and, after his own father's death, in Denmark as well.

Now it happened one day that he took his hawk and went out unattended in a little boat to catch seafowl around the coast.

Whilst thus engaged, he was surprised by a storm, which carried him out to sea and tossed him about for several days and nights, and he was constrained to bale his boat continually to keep it from sinking.

At last, one morning, he was driven ashore on a flat coast that he did not know, and he was so cold and stiff and exhausted with baling and with hunger, that he could hardly move.

The people of the country came down to the beach and found him in the boat, and the hawk still on his hand; so they took him, treated him kindly, gave him to eat, and then presented him to their king. Now the place where Ragnar had been cast up by the sea was Redham, in Norfolk, and the king of the country was called Edmund.

King Edmund received Ragnar very well, and invited him to stay at his court, and, inasmuch as the Danish language was very like the Saxon tongue, Ragnar began to tell how he had been driven by the storm, and also who he was, and King Edmund understood his tale.

Ragnar was very happy hunting in the Suffolk and Norfolk forests, and his hawk was so helpful that he gained far more success than did Biorn, the royal forester. King Edmund made a great deal of his distinguished guest, and both laughed very much at the failures of Biorn where Ragnar was successful.

This made the forester very jealous and angry, and he resolved to kill Ragnar. This, however, was not a very easy thing to do, for Ragnar always wore his suit of hair dipped in pitch, and no weapon would bite in it. Indeed, so hard was this suit, that he would stand up and allow King Edmund and his men to aim at him with their arrows, and they could not hurt him, because their arrows glanced off from the pitch, or were caught among the shaggy masses glued together with the black, hard substance.

Biorn the forester knew he could not kill Lodbrog, unless he pretended to be great friends with him, and he took him wherever there was plenty of waterfowl, and rode with him wherever there were deer to be hunted. By this means Ragnar lost all the slight apprehension towards the man which had been inspired by Biorn at the first.

Now Biorn employed himself in digging a very deep pit in the forest, and when it was finished, he put into it a great many venomous serpents. Then he covered the pit over with branches and earth and sods of grass, and soon no one but himself could tell that it was a pitfall.

When this had been done, he went to Ragnar and said, "Sir, there is a white hart with a gold collar browsing in the wood. Shall we go and hunt it?"

Lodbrog jumped up in delight.

Then Biorn said, "We must run very swiftly, so lay aside your pitchy coat."

"No," answered Ragnar. "I can run in my hairy breeks as fast as you in yours of linen."

Then they set off together, and were alone, for Biorn had said, "We will tell no one, and so have none to share our success in bringing in the white hart with the golden collar."

Then the treacherous forester led him to the depth of the greenwood, and when Ragnar's feet came on the covering of the pitfall, he fell in, and fell among a writhing mass of snakes, that at once endeavoured to fasten on him, but could not bite him because of his pitchy garment.

Then Lodbrog cried out to Biorn to put down his hand and to help him out. Biorn did kneel at the edge of the pit and put down his arm; but when Lodbrog laid hold of his hand, the forester said, "You are too heavy, burdened with your hair and pitch jacket. I cannot raise you."

So Lodbrog took off his jacket and handed it up to Biorn; and then the forester put down his arm again.

Again he said, "You are too heavy. I cannot lift you. Take off your hairy breeks."

"If I do that, the serpents will poison me," answered Ragnar. "Stay a while till I have killed the vermin."

Then he stamped on the heads of the adders and scorpions and other noxious creatures, till he had killed them all.

"Now," said he, "I have no cause to fear." And he pulled off his hairy breeks and handed them up to Biorn.

When the forester saw that Ragnar was thus deprived of his sure defence, he was rejoiced, and he ran to a place where he had collected a barrel full of writhing adders and other deadly reptiles, and he rolled the barrel to the edge of the pit, and poured the venomous creatures down into the deep place in which was Ragnar.

The serpents at once fastened on the bare flesh of the unhappy man, and he cried out in agony to the huntsman, but Biorn *would* not help him. Only Ragnar's dog ran whining round and round the mouth of the pit, and *could* not help him.

Then, when Ragnar saw that he must die, he cast himself down and let the serpents bite him, and he sang a great song, called the "Crow Song,"—which is one of the most ancient poems that exists in northern lands. In this song Ragnar told the story of his life and battles. It begins thus:—

We hewèd with our hangers.
'Twas when the days were young.
And in Gothland we were gangers,
Where the deadly dragon stung.
Oh, and there the serpent cruel
I slew, whom I'd defied;
And Thora, by that duel,
I won to be my bride.

This "Crow Song" consists of twenty-nine verses, and the rest are about his battles, of which you have not been told.

When the wicked forester saw that Lodbrog was dead, then he returned home; he sounded his horn and his own dogs followed him, but the grey wolf-hound that had been with Lodbrog, and which King Edmund had given to his visitor, that would not leave the pit's mouth.

Next day, as King Edmund sat at table, he missed his friend and guest, and anxiously asked his servants about him; on which Biorn the huntsman answered that Ragnar had tarried behind in a wood, and he had seen no more of him.

But as he was speaking, Lodbrog's dog came into the hall and began to wag his tail and fawn on all, and especially on the king; who, on seeing him, said to his attendants, "This is Lodbrog's dog, which I gave him. His master cannot be far behind."

He then began to feed the dog, hoping soon to see his master.

But he was disappointed, for when the wolf-hound had satisfied his appetite, he returned to keep his accustomed watch over his master's body.

After three days, the poor beast was compelled by hunger to return to the king's table, and Edmund, greatly wondering, gave orders to follow the dog when he left the hall, and watch whither he went.

The king's servants fulfilled his commands, and followed the hound, till he led them to the mouth of the pit in which lay Ragnar Lodbrog, stung to death by vipers and other venomous beasts. King Edmund then caused diligent inquisition to be made touching the death of Lodbrog; and Biorn the huntsman was convicted of the crime, and by order of the king, the captains, and wise men, sentence was passed on him.

The judges agreed that the forester should be put in the same boat in which Lodbrog had come to England, and should be exposed on the sea without oar or sail.

Then the body of Ragnar was taken up out of the pit, and a great mound was made over him; and it is said that when William the Conqueror came to England, he broke into this mound, and found the body of the mighty Danish chief and king's son.

Now let us follow the murderer Biorn and see what became of him.

A wind sprang up from the west and blew him out to sea, and swept him on for many days, till it cast him upon the Danish coast.

Now, when he found where he was, that he had come to the land ruled over by Ragnar's sons, then he was very frightened, and in the subtlety of his heart devised means how he might escape hurt himself, and turn evil against those who had been his judges.

And now you must learn that Ragnar's wife Thora had died very soon after she had given him two sons, and that Ragnar had married a second wife, who had given him more sons. You must hear the story of this second wife, whilst Biorn is on his way to the court of Ragnar's sons, devising mischief in his heart.

After Lodbrog had lost his wife Thora, whom he had delivered from the serpent, he was very down-hearted, and he sailed about the seas seeking adventures.

One evening his ship put into a little narrow creek or firth in Norway, and, as there was no bread on board, he bade his men go up on land and find some farmhouse where they might get loaves.

So the men walked some way; at length they saw a light, and, on nearing it, they beheld a little cottage, and they entered and found an old woman.

They asked her to knead dough for them. But she said, "I am old, and my arms are stiff. My daughter is feeding the sheep; she will be home soon, and she will serve you."

Presently the girl, her daughter, came in, and the men were amazed when they saw her. She was upright as a pine, and her hair was as shining gold, and her face like roses and snow. They thought they had never seen any maid so fair, and they said to the old woman, "Is this your daughter?"

She answered, "Who else should she be? her name is Crow."

"A strange crow indeed, with shining golden feathers!" said the men. "And that she should be your daughter is passing strange."

"Why should it be passing strange?" asked the old woman.

Now she had dark skin and black hair, and the men thought that the name of Crow applied to her, and not at all to her daughter. But they did not wish to be so rude as to say this right out in so many words, but they answered, "This is the first time we see a golden oriol hatched out of an old crow's egg in an old crow's nest."

Then the girl set to work to knead the dough, and as she kneaded she sang, and the men could not take their eyes off her, so beautiful was she, and her hair was so long that it flowed down to her heels, so, as she was kneading bread, she took and lashed it like a golden girdle round her waist.

And when the bread was kneaded, then the men baked it at the hearth, and next day returned with it to the ship.

Then Ragnar Lodbrog heard them talking of the beautiful girl, and he became impatient when they said they had never seen anyone so lovely, and he exclaimed, "Is she as fair as was Thora?"

"Indeed," answered his men, "she is far fairer."

Then Ragnar wrathfully said, "Go fetch me this fairest maid to-morrow, and if she be not so fair as Thora, then I will drive you out of my company."

Presently he heard the men say how clever this strange girl was, and he cried out, "Clever? she cannot be more so than was Thora."

"Indeed," answered his men, "she seemed to us to be a hundredfold more clever."

"Go," exclaimed Ragnar, "bring her to me to-morrow, and unless she prove to be far cleverer than was Thora, I will hang you to the yard-arm."

Now, on the following day there was a great storm, and the men could not get to the cottage—they were driven back. So they told the king.

He bethought himself, and he said, "I will put this Crow to the proof. If she be clever as you say, let her come to me clothed yet bare, fed yet not fed, attended yet alone."

So the next day the men went again, and this time the weather was not stormy, and they reached the cottage and gave their message.

Then Crow said, "Go back to the king your master and tell him I will come, as he said, to-morrow."

Now, when the men returned to the ships, Ragnar raised his hand and said, "If that Crow be fair as you say, and come to me clothed yet bare, fed yet not fed, attended yet alone, then I swear before you all, I will make her my wife." For he thought it was not possible. Then he added, "If she be not what you say, I will hang you all up to my yard-arm and sail away with you strung there."

Next morning Crow arose, and drew round her a fishing net of silk, and combed out her hair till it covered her from head to foot; then she took a leek and walked, chewing it as she went; and called her dog and bade it run between her feet. And so she went to the sea-coast, and the king and his men stood on deck and saw how she came: she was bare and yet clothed with the fishing net and her rain of golden hair about her; she was eating a leek and yet, as there was nought in it, she was not full; she was alone, not even her old mother with her, and yet attended by her dog.

Then Ragnar Lodbrog ordered Queen Thora's silk and golden garments to be brought out, that Crow should be arrayed in them. And when she was so arrayed, he could not deny that she was as the sun, and Thora had been in comparison but as the moon.

There was now no talking of hanging the men, but only of his marriage. Yet Crow would not agree till Ragnar had been away on a voyage of two years. And if he returned in two years' time, in the same mind, to marry a poor hag's daughter, then she would consent.

So King Ragnar sailed away, and all the two years he was absent could think only of the golden Crow.

At the end of the time he came back to the same firth, and sent for the fair maid.

Then she came to him and said, " As you desire me to be your wife, I will tell you who I am. I am the daughter of King Sigurd, and he was basely murdered, and my mother died; so I have been in hiding from his enemies in the house of my old nurse. If you are a king's son, I am a king's daughter. My real name is not Crow, but Aslauga."

Then a grand marriage was held, and Aslauga became the mother of five sons. So Ragnar was the father, in all, of seven.

Now I will return to Biorn on his way to the palace of Ragnar's sons. By the time he reached it, he had made up a story which he would tell.

So he entered the great hall where the sons were, and he went up to the high seat on which sat Hingvar, and saluted him.

Hingvar asked him his name, and who he was.

Now there were in the hall at the time only four of the sons of Ragnar. There was Hingvar in the high seat. Another was called Hubba, and he was scraping a spear-shaft, standing on the hall floor. Another was called Sigurd Worm-in-the-eye; he was cutting his nails and playing draughts with his brother Whitesark.

Hingvar asked Biorn whence he came, and what his errand was. Then the treacherous wretch said that he came from England and from King Edmund. He had been a great friend of Ragnar and had attended him ever since he was cast up upon the Norfolk shore. He went on to say that Edmund had foully murdered Ragnar, and he had done this by casting him into a pit that was full of vipers which had stung Lodbrog to death; and he added that he had done this by the advice of Ella, King of Northumberland, for these two kings had agreed together with a great fleet to sail to Denmark and subjugate it to themselves. Then the false forester opened a bundle and showed the pitch and hair dress of Ragnar, in proof of the truth of his story.

It is told that whilst Biorn related the death of their father, the four sons remained still, listening. Hingvar turned first red as blood and then white as snow, and his face was puffed with the rage that boiled in his heart. Hubba gripped the spear-staff so hard that every finger sank into the wood and left its impression on it. Whitesark clenched the draught-board so tightly that the blood flowed from under his nails; and Sigurd cut into his finger to the bone without noticing what he had done.

There was silence in the hall for some minutes, and then the brothers solemnly promised to avenge their father.

So they hasted and gathered together a great fleet, and sailed for England. They landed in Northumberland and ravaged it, and then marched south till they came to the territories of King Edmund.

Now the king had a palace at Hoxne, and he gathered a great army, and a furious battle was fought, in which the English were defeated, and King Edmund fled. As he was pursued, he hid himself under a bridge, and his pursuers galloped over it, thinking he was ahead, but one of them, happening to look into the water, saw there something shining, and he drew rein to look more closely. It was like two flames in the water. He descended the bank, and there saw the king in hiding. The sun, shining on his gold spurs, had cast the luminous reflection in the water, and this had attracted the attention of the Dane.

Edmund was dragged forth and taken to a great oak tree, tied to it, and the Danes shot at him with their arrows, till they were tired of the sport, and then they cut off his head and flung it into the thicket.

When they thought it might be done safely, some of his servants who had been in concealment came forth and searched for the body. This they soon found; and in the coppice was the king's head, with the golden crown still surrounding the brows, and it was guarded by the grey wolf-hound that had been given by Edmund to Ragnar, and which, ever since his master's death, had run wild in the forest.

Now the tidings of the king's head being defended by the beast was talked about; and indeed the dog would not leave the remains of the king, any more than he had those of Ragnar.

Then Biorn, who was with the Danish host, thought he would like to see the head of his former master, and Hingvar and Hubba gave orders that the head should be brought into the hall.

When this was done, the wolf-hound followed, but no sooner did he see the traitor,—the cause of the death of both his masters,—than the faithful beast flew at Biorn and fastened his teeth in his throat, and, struggle as he might, the forester could not throw him off. The hound cast him on the ground and stood over him, looking up in the faces of the Danish chiefs.

Hingvar and Hubba thought that there must be some reason for the wrath of the dog against Biorn, so they called to them some of the captives, who had been servants to King Edmund, and asked if they knew him.

They replied that he was a traitor and a murderer, and told how Edmund had received Ragnar Lodbrog, and treated him kindly, and how that the forester had murdered him, by casting him into a pit of vipers, and how that the king and his wise men had sentenced Biorn to be sent adrift at sea in an open boat.

When Hingvar and Hubba heard this, they were very sorry that they had been so deceived, and they ordered the wolf-dog to leave the prostrate man.

Then the hound obeyed, and Biorn was fast bound. The brothers commanded him to show them the pit in which their father had perished, and this he did. Then they ordered it to be filled with poisonous reptiles, and the wicked forester to be cast in, that he might die in the same manner as he had contrived the death of their father.

After that, they made for King Edmund a splendid funeral, and he was buried at a place then called Bodricksworth, but ever since that time it has been known as Bury Saint Edmunds.

NOTE.—We have two versions of the story of the sons of Ragnar Lodbrog coming to England; one is that in the Icelandic Saga of Ragnar and his sons, and the other is that told by Roger of Wendover in his *Flowers of History*, written about 1200. No doubt he took the story of Lodbrog and King Edmund from a ballad.

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle says, under date 870: "This year the army (of the Danes) rode across Mercia, into East Anglia, and took up their winter quarters at Thetford. And the same winter King Edmund fought against them, and the Danes got the victory, and slew the king and subdued the land, and destroyed all the minsters which they came to. The names of their chiefs who slew the king were Ingvar and Hubba."

The most genuine account of King Edmund, next, of course, to this scanty mention in the Chronicle, is a life written by Abbo of Fleury, by command of St. Dunstan, in 980.

The Norse version of the story and the English version are very different, and I have ventured to combine both, and attempt some sort of reconciliation between the two.

XIV

DESIDERATUS

On a time it was that there lived in Scotland a noble vavasor and his wife, whom he loved full well, and she was good and wise.

There was but one thing made them sad, which was that they had no child.

Now one day the lady said to the vavasor, "Sweet friend, I have heard that far away in the south is the tomb of the holy hermit Giles, and it lieth in fair Provence. It has been related to me how that many have made petition where his bones lie, and have had their petitions heard and answered. It seemeth well to me, if it pleaseth thee, that we should make journey to St. Giles, and seek if there the desire of our hearts may be attained."

Then answered her the vavasor, "As thou desirest, sweetheart, so shall it be; and I vow unto St. Giles a figure all of pure silver, if he hears our request." So they made their carriage and went, and prayed right humbly, that if it pleased God, He would give to them a child, and that the hermit Giles might forward their petition.

And when they returned to Calder in Scotland where they dwelled, it was even so, that a child was given to them, a son; and they called his name Desideratus, that is to say, "the Desired One."

The child was very comely and blithe, and all thought that they had never seen a lovelier and kindlier boy. He grew up at home till he reached man's estate, and was the joy and pride of his father and mother.

Now, when he was of age to go forth and see men and learn courtesy, then did his father send him to the court of the Scottish king.

The king held him right dear, and dubbed him knight, and after he had been a while at court, and had won the favour of all there through his gracious manners and his well-favoured face, then he bethought himself of wending farther, and he departed thence, and visited Normandy and Brittany, where he rode in many a tournament and unhorsed many a proved knight.

And it was so, in France likewise, that all looked with pleasure on Desideratus and loved him, for he was courteous to high and to low, and debonair, and withal of a bright and beautiful countenance.

Now, when ten years were over, then Desideratus greatly longed to return to his own land, and to see again his father and his mother, and to serve the Scottish king.

So he mounted a ship, he with his horse, and committed himself to the winds and waves. But the winds were favourable, and the waves did but play and drift around the sides of the ship. The seabirds fluttered overhead and cried, and the sun glittered in the dancing wavelets. There was never a storm all the while that Desideratus was at sea, and at length the prow was turned in at the Firth of Forth and Desideratus and his horse came on shore, and he mounted and rode to fair Edinburgh and presented himself before the king, who was fain again to see him. But there was sad tidings for the young man, for his father was dead. Then the king committed to him in fee the land that his father had held, and he dismissed him, that he should go and see and comfort his mother; and when he departed it was the feast of Pentecost, and all the bells were ringing, and the sun was shining, and clerks were singing in every church.

Then was it fair springtide, and as Desideratus rode along his way, he wondered to see how goodly the land was. Fair was Normandy, and fair Bretagne, but fairer far was bonnie Scotland. And as he rode along the king's highway, all were keeping holiday, and the maids were in their best kirtles, and their hair bound up with ribbons and flowers, and some did dance, and some did sing; but as Desideratus rode by, all ceased, and looked, and admired the goodly knight.

Then thought Desideratus, Fair maids have I seen in Normandy, and nut-brown maids in Bretagne, but never such bonnie lassies as in Scotland.

Now he rode along till he came into a forest, and the birds were singing, and the flowers blooming, and the bees were humming, as though all nature kept the coming of the Blessed Spirit whose is the breath of life.

Now Desideratus wore silver armour, and over it a garment "white as flowers in April," and about his shoulders was a fresh green mantle. His spurs were of gold, but not more shining were they than his locks that flowed from under his bassinet.

After long riding, then, Desideratus remembered that in this forest sojourned a holy hermit, who by his cell had a little chapel, the which he served in godly fashion. Ofttimes as a boy, when hunting with his father, had he been there, and there had received kind welcome and hospitality. Thither now he turned, but he could not light thereon; only at set of sun he came to an opening in the forest where was a spring of pure water, and by this spring stood a fair maid with a garment of purple over her white shift; she was barefooted in the grass now wet with the falling dew. In each hand she held a golden bowl, and she stooped to the fountain, and dipped, and filled the bowls with water.

Then Desideratus alighted from off his horse, and he came to the fair maid, and he asked her whether she could guide him to the habitation of the holy hermit.

She answered him that of hermit she knew none, but that her mistress lived hard by, and would render to him hospitality.

Then she went before, and he followed, leading his destrier. They went along till they came to an elder-bush, and though the season for the elder to flower was not yet, nevertheless the bush was thick set with white bunches and with green leaves, and withal was such a tangle of little boughs, that Desideratus could not see through this flowery screen. But the fair maid parted the leaves and lifted a bough, and the knight stepped under, but was constrained to let his horse remain behind, letting go the bridle.

Before him he saw a pleasant lawn, and a lady seated in a tent of cloth of silver, and she was as white in her apparel as the plume of a swan, and so lovely that Desideratus thought that verily he had seen none lovelier, wherever he had been.

She signed to the damsel, who came forward carrying the golden bowls, and she inquired whom she had brought with her. The damsel answered and told the lady all she knew.

Then the beautiful lady signed to Desideratus to draw nigh; and when he was drawn nigh, she smiled and said, "Art thou content to be my lord, and I thy lady? If so, then pledge me in this bowl of crystal water."

Desideratus answered and said, "I am whatever thou wouldst have me to be."

Then she stirred the water in one bowl with a little blue flower that she held, and she passed the vessel to him, and he drank.

And forthwith, or ever he had sipped of the water, he forgot all that had passed. He remembered no more of his father and mother and his home, nor of the Scottish king. Nor thought he of his destrier whom he had left outside the screen of flowering elder; and thus there passed a twelvemonth and a day, and it was to Desideratus as a dream of the night. And there fell no leaves from the trees, nor did the grass wither, nor the flowers fade. There fell no rain nor snow, neither did stormy winds blow and shake the branches of the trees above their heads.

Now it chanced that Desideratus felt his lips parched, and he stretched forth his hand to take the golden bowl and drink again of the pure water he had tasted. But, as it fell out, he reached the bowl of water the lady had not stirred. Forthwith, or ever he had drunk a draught, he remembered all the past, and was filled with wonder as to where he was. Then, all at once, he heard a bell ringing, and he felt a desire to kneel in God's house, and to pray, and hear sweet singing of psalms.

Thereat Desideratus started up to go forth out of the tent, and he saw the beautiful lady standing before him. He said to her, " I hear a bell. I must to prayer. I must home to my mother and to my house, and see her, and then return to the king my master."

Now, when the lady heard this, she was sad, and wept, and she drew a golden ring from her finger and put it upon his, and said, " It must needs be that thou depart. Speak to no one of what thou hast seen, and of me, and where thou hast tarried. Wear this ring, and think of me, and when thou desirest to return, then turn it about on thy finger. But if thou speak of me, then the ring will vanish away, and thou shalt see me no more till thou hast recovered it."

He thanked her, and went forth and passed under the flowering elder, and he heard the bell tolling, and he went on, and then there neighed a horse, and there ran up to him his own destrier.

Then he saw a hermit's cell, and ringing the bell was the old hermit with whom he had lodged, he and his father, the vavasor, in former days. Now the hermit was very aged, and of a reverend aspect, with hair and beard white as a snowdrift.

The old religious man was surprised when he saw Desideratus, and left off ringing the bell, and he said, " Where hast thou been, my son ? Thy horse came here on Pentecost last year. And now there is passed a year and a day that I have cared for him and stabled him, and only to-day dost thou appear."

Then Desideratus was full of wonder, and he wist not with whom he had been, and whether it had been a work of enchantment.

So he said to the hermit that he would tell him all, and take his counsel. And so he kneeled him down and made confession of what had come to pass.

Then the hermit said, " I cannot tell thee who and what manner of woman that was with whom thou hast been. This is a wood full of enchantments. I know full well that Satan and his angels seek the destruction of men, and can change themselves into forms of angels of light. But it may be that thou hast been in the presence and company of the elves, which are creations of God, and wondrous fair, but have no human souls, and they live a while, and then their lives cease like the extinguishing of a lamp. And they can alone win an immortal soul by union with one of the children of Adam. Therefore do they seek them. But this I lay on thee—if thou see that fair lady again, then be to her as a stranger, unless she will come to thee to the church of God, and there thy union be consecrated and blessed by a priest."

Now, when he had said this, then Desideratus stood up, and he looked on his hand, and lo! the ring was vanished clean away.

Thereat was Desideratus full of sorrow at heart. And he tarried all night, and next morning, at the breaking of the day, he kneeled in the chapel and heard the service of Almighty God sung by the hermit, and then forth he fared, and he rode till he reached Calder, and came to his home.

But his mother was dead as well as his father, and he cared not to remain; and, after some days, he departed, and rode through the forest of Caledon, and came again to Edinburgh to the king his master.

And he served him four years. But he was not as he had been. He was ever sad, thinking of the fair lady in the forest, and wondering who she might be, and grieving sore that he had lost the ring.

Now it fell out one day, when he and the king were hunting a stag in the forest, that they beheld a white hart that had a circlet of gold about its neck, and they gave it chase, and presently they came upon it, and the hart was on the green herb beside a spring and a fair boy stood sheltering it under his arm, and he had a little bow, from which he could shoot straws, and he held this up and cried that he would slay those who pursued the hart, if they drew nearer and did a harm to the gentle beast.

Then the king laughed, and he and Desideratus alighted and drew near to the boy; and never had they seen so beautiful a child—his eyes were blue as forget-me-nots and his hair as spun gold.

Then it happened that when they were nigh him Desiderius spied a gold ring that hung about the boy's neck, and he knew it again, and he cried and said, "My son, whose is that ring? where didst thou get it?"

And the boy answered and said, "That is my father's ring and he is away, and none know where he may be. But even if we did know, my mother may not see him again, for forty knights keep guard about her day and night, with swords drawn to slay my father should he come."

Then Desideratus took the child and kissed him, and wept sore and said, "Thou art my very son, and I will take the ring again, then haply I may find thy mother."

So he took the ring and set it on his finger again. And lo! the child and the white hart had vanished clean away.

After this, Desideratus had no rest in his spirit for the thoughts of his elfin wife and half elfin child. He was so sad that the king grieved for him and said, "It is not well that it should be so. Go into the great forest of Caledon and see if thou canst not find her whom thou lovest."

Then Desideratus was glad, and he rode from court and entered into the forest and disappeared under its green leaves and among its shadows.

Now, as he entered, there had been haymakers without, tossing the sweet hay with their rakes; and they looked at him and wondered, and said, "Of a certainty never have we seen a comelier knight, nor one of a more sorrowful countenance."

It fell out that, after many hours' riding, Desideratus came to a glade in the wood where sprang up a crystal spring and formed a pool, and then flowed away in a small rill. Beside this spring was a dwarf, and he had in his hands two golden bowls, and these he essayed to fill with water at the pool. But, forasmuch as the dwarf was very small and the sides of the pool were steep, no sooner were the bowls filled than they overbalanced the dwarf, and he fell into the water. Speedily he scrambled out, never letting go his hold of the bowls. But, in his efforts to escape out of the pool, he spilt all the water out of his bowls. Then, again, he kneeled and dipped, and again overbalanced himself and fell head foremost into the spring.

Desideratus, seated on his horse, sat and watched the little dwarf, and sorrowed for his useless trouble. So he lighted off his steed, and went to the dwarf, and filled his bowls with water for him.

The little dwarf was vastly pleased, and thanked him, and hoisted one bowl on one shoulder and one on the other to carry them. But they were thus too heavy for him to convey, and he stumbled and spilled all the water again. Whereupon he began to howl and cry.

Then Desideratus filled the bowls again at the spring and bade the dwarf be of good cheer, he would carry them home for him.

"I know not how that may be, fair sir," said the dwarf. "I was sent by my mistress, the princess of Elfland, and the door of her palace is guarded with warriors armed *cap à pie* who will never let thee pass. This only canst thou do. Take them to the doorstep and set them down there, then I will call forth Blanchebelle, her waiting-maid, and she will help me carry them to my lady's chamber."

Now Desideratus carried the golden bowls easily one in each hand, and he passed under an elder-bush and was at once in Elfland. He saw before him the palace of the king of the elves; and he drew to the door.

Then said the dwarf, "Fair sir, for thy service I thank thee. Set down the bowls here and I will have them conveyed to my lady."

"None shall convey them but myself," said Desideratus.

"That may not be," said the dwarf.

Then Desideratus declared he would return and carry the bowls away with him unless the dwarf showed him the way to the chamber of his lady.

Now, when the dwarf saw his determination, he considered and said, "Thou must ascend by a ladder to her window, and that thou must do carrying one of the bowls in thy hand. And when thou art nigh the top of the ladder, scratch with thy nail on the bowl and it will whine. Then the fair maid, Blanchebelle, will look forth, and when she sees thee, she will know what to do."

Thereupon Desideratus was glad, and he went to the window, and there was a ladder set against it, and he ascended thereby, carrying the golden bowl.

But when he was nigh the top, he scratched the bowl, and it began to whine and whimper.

Then the fair Blanchebelle looked forth and said, "What aileth my pretty golden bowl?"

And straightway she saw Desideratus on the ladder below. Then she plucked a blue flower out of her hair, and with it she stirred the water in the bowl and then withdrew the flower, and he saw her no more.

Now it was so, that the fair princess of the elves was asleep within on a couch, and her little child was also asleep in her arms. But round about were forty knights of elfin race, louting on one knee, their faces turned outward, and all with swords drawn and pointed.

Now Blanchebelle went with the blue flower dipped in the water of the well that was in the golden bowl Desideratus held aloft, and with it laughingly she touched the eyes of the kneeling knights.

Forthwith they all fell asleep.

Then she returned to the window and took the bowl out of the hands of Desideratus and bade him enter.

"Now," said she, "I pray thee be speedy, for the knights sleep only for a moment."

Thereat he leaped in, but, in so doing, his foot slipped and he fell on one of the swords, which wounded his side full sore. And with the noise of his fall, the knights waked and looked about them, and started to their feet.

But Desideratus sprang to the side of the couch on which lay the sleeping lady, and from her arms he lifted the child and carried it away.

"Fly! or they will slay thee," said Blanchebelle, and she sprinkled more of the water over the knights, and again they closed their eyes and were still.

Now Desideratus hasted down the ladder, carrying the child, and he fled, and went under the elder-bush, and came forth, and found his horse where he had bound it. Then he mounted, and, carrying the sleeping boy, whose face he kissed, he rode away.

But the wound in his side bled, and he was weak, and he could but reach the hermit's cell, where he put the child into the ancient man's hands, and, so done, he fell off his horse in a swound on the green herbage.

Now it must be told how that the ancient hermit nursed and cared for Desideratus, and he was speedily better, yet the wound would not heal.

And the hermit said to him, "It has been revealed to me that the wound thou hast received is from an elfin sword, and that no balm of mortal men can cure it, only can it be closed and thy blood staunched by the touch of thy elfin wife's hand. For there runs a vein from that wound direct to the heart, and there is never a hand in Christendom and Elfdom that can heal it, save that of the princess thy wife. But how that may be, I know not."

Then said to him Desideratus, "Take my child and give him holy baptism, and call him Tristam, for that I am sad at being parted from her I love better than my life."

But the hermit said, "I will go with thee to court, and I will ask the king himself to stand sponsor to the boy."

Then Desideratus mounted his horse, but slowly, slowly did he ride, for that his wound was sore, and as he went, ever and anon did the blood run out, and fell on the green grass and the leaves.

As to the ancient hermit, he walked at his side and carried the child, that laughed and was merry and prattled.

So they went on to fair Edinburgh. But as they came forth out of the wood, there was a wain, and it was full of hay, and the haymakers were about to carry the last load. Then, when they saw how white and wan and wounded was the comely knight, and how ancient and venerable was the hermit, and burdened with bearing of the boy, they cried out with one accord that Desideratus and the holy man and the child should ride on top of the hay.

And it was so.

Now, as this was the last load, all the wain was adorned with flowers and coloured ribbons, and in front was a pole with a wreath hung thereto.

So the haymakers said, "Whither shall we take the wounded knight?"

And the ancient religious man said, "To Edinburgh, to the king's high court."

And it was so.

Now, when the hay-cart drew up before the gates of the palace, folk laughed to see the beautiful little boy seated in the sweet hay, holding the pole with the wreath of wild roses and ribbons in front, Then they marvelled to behold the reverend man come down; and they were moved with pity when the haymakers lifted the bleeding knight from the wain and bore him into the palace. But as for the child, he carried the staff with the wreath before them, and had no fear going up the stair to the hall where sat the king on his throne.

Now, when the Scottish king saw what had taken place, and heard the report of the ancient hermit, then he was marvellously glad to see the pretty boy, and he promised that forthwith he would be his sponsor. But right grieved was he to see how sorely wounded was his favourite knight.

He sent for all the healers and physicians, that they might heal the grievous wound, but they availed naught. And as Desideratus had spilled much of his blood, all greatly feared that he must shortly die.

He said that he desired to see his son made into a Christian man, and all prepared to haste to the church, where the king would hold the child and give to it the name it was to bear.

Now, just as they were preparing to go to the church, and the haymakers had lifted up the wounded knight to carry him thither, there came riding into the hall a lady so beautiful that all the place was filled with light as from sunshine. She rode on a cream-white palfrey with sky-blue trappings set with silver; and behind her rode another maid, on a white ass, and they lighted down before the king and did him homage.

Then said the chief lady, "I am come, sire, to heal my husband. I have escaped out of Elfinland, and I never could have found him but by the blood track all the way on the grass and the green leaves and the flowers. Moreover, sir king, I never could have escaped out of Elfinland but by stepping on his blood. See how the soles of my feet are marked."

She showed her feet, and there was blood on them.

"I am the daughter of the elf king, and he has no other child but me; and I must reign and rule after him in the realm of elves. Therefore he would retain me there, and have me take to my husband one of the elfin race.

"But ever have I longed for a human soul and the life of immortality. Therefore, when Desideratus came into Elfinland, I took him to be my husband, and a son was born to me; and my father drew an enchantment about me, that I should not go to Desideratus, nor he come to me. Nevertheless, through all dangers and opposition he thrust his way, and he carried off my son; and yet I could not have won my way out had not my husband's blood broken the enchanted ring, and only upon human blood could I tread and go forth."

Then the king was joyful, and he answered the lady fair, and said that he would stand sponsor to the child, and she should live ever in the court of Scotland and be in great esteem.

But she said, "Sire, that may not be. I must return to mine own land; but suffer me first to kiss and to heal my husband."

Thereupon she went to where Desideratus lay, and she kissed his lips, and touched his side, and his blood staunched, and he rose, and was well once more.

He said, " And now, of a surety, we must be Christianly married, as the hermit bade of old."

And she said, " It shall be so, only consider thou. As it is, I must return to Elfinland, and I may return alone; but if I go alone, then the king my father will marry me to an elfin lord, and I shall never come forth again, but sorrow will consume me, and I shall die of sheer grief. But and if thou and I be Christianly married, and blessed and sained by a priest, then the king my father, and no power in earth or hell, can ever part us. Only this must follow —that thou come with me and reign in Elfinland, and return to the world of men no more. Make thine election which it shall be."

Then Desideratus took her hand and led her to the altar, and bade a priest bless them. And after that the child was baptised.

Now there was feasting and merriment that night. But in the middle of the banquet there came into the hall the white palfrey, and the cream-coloured ass, and the destrier of the knight Desideratus, and no man led them, and they stayed in the hall.

Then the lady rose up and said, " We must depart. That is the token."

Then she mounted her palfrey, and took the little Christian child in her arms, and the fair maid Blanchebelle mounted on the ass, and Desideratus bestrode his horse, and forth they rode out of the hall and into the night. The stars were shining, and men looked and saw how they rode towards the wood of Caledon.

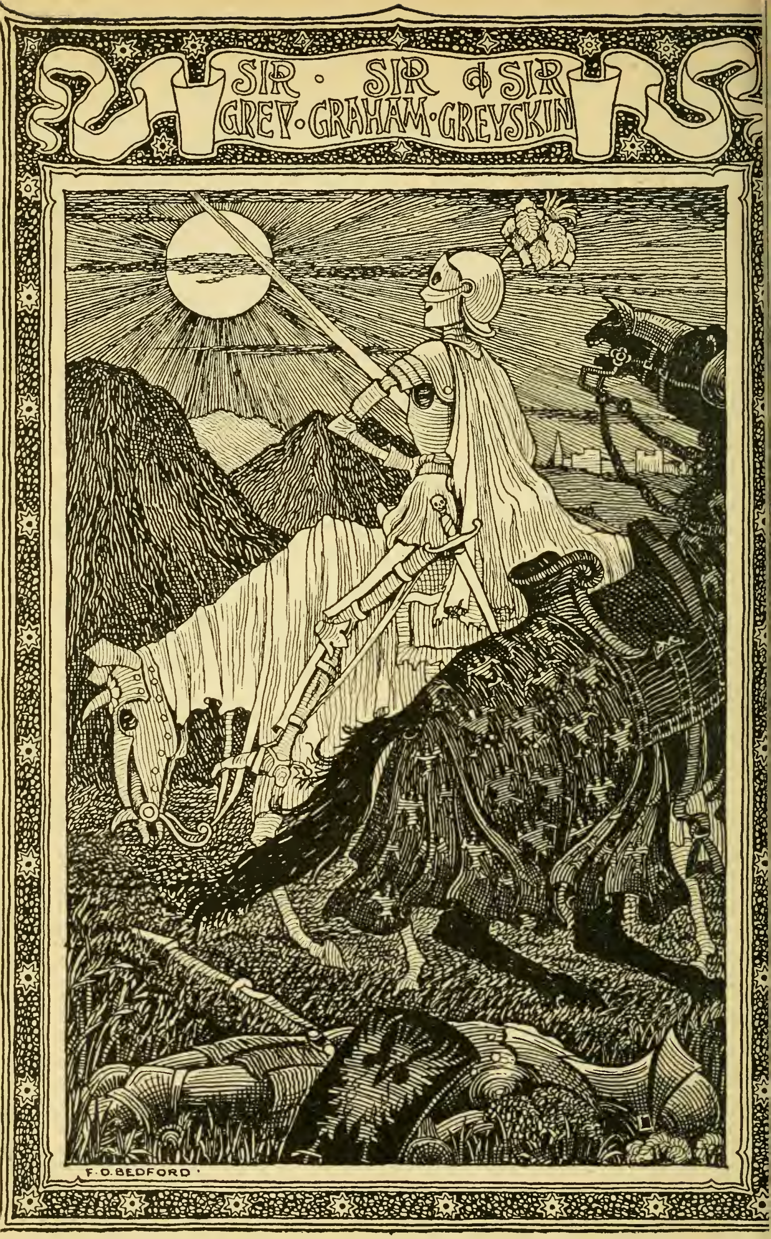
And thenceforth was Desideratus seen no more.

NOTE.—The "Lai del Désiré," on which the story of Desideratus is based is found in one MS. only, and belonged to Sir Thomas Phillips, Bart. of Middlehall. It is in old Norman-French, and is attributable to the twelfth century. It was first printed by Francisque Michel in 1836. London, Pickering. It is one of the many Norman-French lays based on Celtic tradition and myth, that delighted the kings and nobles of the court of the Plantagenets. This story has a clear family relation to that of Thomas of Ercildoun; only in the latter, Thomas escapes from Fairyland, and in this *lai* of Desideratus, the hero returns to it for ever. It is moreover the same as Marie's Lai of Lanval and as that of Gruelan in Le Grand d'Aussi. See Ritson's *Metrical Romances, i.* 170. I have taken a few liberties with the tale. In the original the true elfin character of the lady is not plainly expressed, but rather implied. Moreover, no reason is given for her enigmatical conduct.

As a sample of the language in which the *lai* is written, I give the opening lines—

Entente i mettrai e ma cure
A recunter un aventure,
Dunt cil qui à icel tens resquirent
Par remembrance un lai firent.
Ça est li lais del Désiré,
Ki tant par fu de grant beuté.
En Escoce a une cuntreé,
Ki Calatir est apellée
Encoste de la Blanche Lande (Albion),
Juste la mer ki tant est grande.

Although the *lai* comes to us only in Norman-French, yet it almost certainly has had a Brito-English origin, and is probably an English ballad that has been worked up into a *lai* by a French *trouvère*. Marie says that all her *lais* were taken from British originals.


SIR · SIR & SIR
GREY · GRAHAM · GREYSKIN
F. D. BEDFORD

XV

SIR GREY, SIR GRAHAM, AND SIR GREYSKIN

LONG ago, in the period when England was divided into seven kingdoms, before that Egbert had united them into one, there lived in Cambridgeshire, as we now call it, a king called Ethelnoth, and he had an only daughter called Elgiva.[1] Elgiva was the only child of the king, and her father was anxious that she should be well married. Elgiva, on the other hand, seemed to be quite unwilling to have a husband. The king sent for the noblest in the land, some of whose pedigrees went back even to Adam and Eve; but Elgiva said she did not desire as a husband a man the best part of whom, like a pig-nut, was underground. Then he sent for the handsomest men; but Elgiva said that she had no desire to marry a pretty doll. Then he sent for the most learned men, but she said she would not marry a dryasdust; and when he asked her to say whom she would take, she said that she would only accept as her husband the bravest man and strongest in fight who could be found.

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[1] Or, as M. S. A. Freeman would call her, Æalfgifu.

This accordingly was proclaimed through the length and breadth of England. The tidings reached even Scotland and Wales. Brave knights came from every quarter, and Elgiva made them fight before her and hack one another about. When one was dreadfully wounded and defeated, he was dismissed to his home and relations to be mended up again; his chance was gone, and he might never more become a candidate for her hand.

But Elgiva would not accept the last victor; she pitted him against a new comer; and she was so indifferent to her suitors that she knew them only by their numbers, and not by their names. For instance, if a white knight came and defeated a black knight, he counted as one. If a red knight defeated the white knight, he counted as two; if he further overcame a yellow knight, he reckoned as three; but if he were beaten, his conqueror was numbered four.

This was rather cruel pastime, and it served to harden Elgiva's heart and make her indifferent to the sufferings of men; indeed, all she cared for was the sport of making them fight.

At last her father remonstrated very seriously with her, and said that he could endure this no longer. She must make a final decision and abide by it. The number of disabled and defeated knights now amounted to three hundred and thirty-eight. She said she must make up a round number before she gave her hand.

At this juncture there rode into Cambridge two knights. One was of the north country, and his name was Sir Grey; and the other was a Scottish knight called Sir Graham. They were fast friends, and as attached as brothers; indeed, they had entered into fellowship together to fight each other's battles, and never to come to blows between them.

The two knights were graciously received at the court of Cambridge, or rather Grantchester, which was the site of the royal hall and palace, and which was the capital, till the university drew away the population about it, and Grantchester dwindled to a village, whilst Cambridge from a village sprang up to be a town.

There was, however, at Cambridge some rising ground, on which was a castle, that is to say, earthworks enclosing a space roughly square, with a great mound at one end, and this castle went by the name of Wandlebury. No one who lived in the village or hamlet of Cambridge ventured near it at night, for the castle was haunted. It was said that a ghostly rider issued from the mound and was prepared to fight anyone who dared encounter him. Indeed, if a man at night came within the precinct of the castle and cried aloud, "One knight challenges another knight!" immediately the mound gaped, and out rode the phantom on an ash-grey horse, clad in armour that rattled as though he who was within were only bones. And he cried in a hollow voice in reply, "I, Sir Greyskin, accept the challenge." Whether there were truth in this story or no, not one person in Cambridge could say, for the very good reason that no one had been found hardy enough to attempt the adventure and challenge Sir Greyskin. The spectral warrior was a subject of much discussion and considerable doubt.

When the two knights arrived at Grantchester, they found that a valiant man was in possession of the field, who was known as Number One hundred and thirty-eight, and they were at once summoned to do battle with Number One hundred and thirty-eight; that is to say, the princess required Sir Grey to joust with him, and whoever was victor to do the same with the Scottish knight Sir Graham.

Then this latter said to Princess Elgiva, "Should my dear comrade fall before the spear of his antagonist, I shall most certainly, rush to revenge him on Number One hundred and thirty-eight."

"If that your friend fall, then Number One hundred and thirty-eight will become Number One hundred and thirty-nine, and should you defeat him, you will be the happy man, Number One hundred and forty, and be my husband, and inherit the realm."

"But I sincerely hope that Sir Grey will be successful against him who now holds the field," said Sir Graham.

"If that should happen, you will have to break a lance against your comrade,"

"I cannot do that. Nothing would induce me to do such a thing."

"Not the prospect of winning me?" asked Elgiva.

"Not even that," replied the knight.

"Then I hope you will both of you be knocked head over heels by my champion now in the jousting yard," said the princess angrily.

The combat was to take place on the morrow.

When Sir Grey and Sir Graham retired for the night, the former informed his friend that he was consumed with an ardent passion for the beautiful Elgiva. He had, he said, never seen anyone whom he had so much admired, and he concluded, after abundant sighs, with saying that life would not be worth living unless he won her hand.

Next morning, so greatly was Sir Grey moved by his passion, that he easily unhorsed his adversary, and became Number One hundred and thirty-nine. He was now sanguine of winning the lady, but with a stern voice she said, " I shall never accept anyone who is an odd number. Smite your companion, throw him in the dust, and I will accept your suit."

To this, notwithstanding his passion, Sir Grey would not consent. Accordingly, after some consideration, Elgiva said, " Then here is the adventure I set you. The full moon rises to-night. Ride to Wandlebury, and challenge the spectral guardian of the castle and dweller in the mound. You must ride alone—no one must accompany you."

Sir Grey eagerly accepted the task. Sir Graham vainly endeavoured to dissuade him from it. He represented to him that a lady who was ready to sacrifice so many suitors was hardly one who ought to inspire love, and that the possession of her hand and inheritance could not compensate the risk of so uncertain an adventure.

But Sir Grey would listen to no advice. Next evening he rode to Cambridge, traversed the marshes, and ascended Wandlebury just as the moon began to rise. He could see the jack o' lanterns dancing in the morasses by the river Cam. No one was with him. No one was in sight.

He saw before him high mounds, and an opening in the embankment, through which he penetrated. Then in a loud voice he called, "One knight challenges another knight."

He had hardly uttered the words before the great how or mound gaped, and forth issued a harnessed figure riding on a grey steed, that seemed to have no flesh on it, but to be a skeleton clothed in skin. Altogether the beast was sorry, and not less sorry seemed the rider, in rattling, rusty, broken armour that hardly held together.

This strange rider answered, "I, Sir Greyskin, accept the challenge."

Then both knights set their spears in rest and charged at each other. In a moment Sir Grey's steed reared, and the lance of the spectral knight touched him on the breast and cast him on the field. He fell with such violence that he lost consciousness, and lay for some time as one dead.

When he came to his senses again, he rose to his knees and then to his feet, feeling much bruised and in great pain, especially in his right hand. His horse had galloped away in terror, and was nowhere to be seen.

Sir Grey with difficulty walked out of the ancient camp, and descended the hill, threaded his way through the marshes, and sank exhausted at a door of a house in Cambridge.

Those within, hearing the rattle of arms and a groan, hastened to open, and discovered the knight prostrate on the threshold. They took him up, removed his armour, and found his right gauntlet full of blood.

The forefinger of his right hand had been cut off. The house into which Sir Grey was taken was that of a very beautiful, noble, and gracious lady, named Margaret.

He was treated with the utmost kindness, but nothing could overcome his sadness of spirit, at the thought that he had been defeated by the spectre knight, and had lost his finger, and that a finger which disabled him from handling well his sword and lance.

After he had spent several days in the house of the Lady Margaret, he departed, and returned to Grantchester, where he found his friend, Sir Graham, in great anxiety about him. He arrived in most disconsolate mood.

> A truncheon of his spear he bore
> To lean him on ; he had no more.
> On his bedside he sat him down,
> He groanèd sore, and fell in swoun.

Sir Graham had great difficulty in restoring his spirits sufficiently to draw from him the narrative of his discomfiture. Then Sir Graham strove to console him. But Sir Grey answered, " Talk not to me of comfort, since the fair Elgiva is lost to me for ever. I am vanquished and disgraced ; vanquished in equal combat with a single knight. I am not even Number One hundred and thirty-eight—I am nothing, and that spectral being rising on my ruins is Number One hundred and thirty-nine."

Sir Graham thought it useless to argue any further with him. He considered how he might best restore happiness to his friend.

"You are," said he, "the victim of your rashness. We cannot conceal from the princess your return or your misfortune, but I assure you that I will hasten to Wandlebury and avenge you. If I am successful, I shall endeavour to make the lady accept you in place of myself; for, to tell you the truth, so far from her inspiring me with affection, I am entirely indifferent to her charms."

Accordingly, Sir Graham armed himself, mounted his horse, and at nightfall rode through the marshes, among the dancing jack o' lanterns, and, reaching the hill that was crowned with the ancient camp, ascended it, and, passing through the gap in the entrenchment, called aloud, "One knight challenges another knight." Immediately the mound gaped, and out rode the phantom on an ash-grey horse, clad in armour that rattled as though he who was within were only bones. And he cried in a hollow voice in reply, "I, Sir Greyskin, accept the challenge."

Then both knights set their lances in rest, struck spurs into their steeds, and rushed on each other.

It befell Sir Graham no better than it had Sir Grey. As the spectre knight approached, Sir Graham's horse swerved, and the spear of Sir Greyskin struck the rider on the side and bore him out of his saddle, and flung him on the ground, where he fell senseless. Then the frightened horse galloped away.

It was long before consciousness returned. When Sir Graham felt a little recovered, he rose, aching in all his limbs, and feeling great pain in his right hand. He left the camp, descended the hill, and, wandering through the marshes, happened to come to the same gate as that which had so hospitably opened to his brother in arms. Here he was received with the like kindness. He was bathed in warm water, and ointment was applied to his bruises. When his right gauntlet was taken off, it was found to be full of blood, for he also had lost his forefinger.

Sir Graham was much distressed at his discomfiture, but by no means as despondent as had been Sir Grey. The consequence was that he recovered much more rapidly, and that he had eyes wherewith to see what a very sweet lady the fair Margaret was, and a heart to be sensible to gratitude, and even something warmer. Indeed, Sir Graham remained under the care of the Lady Margaret considerably longer than had Sir Grey—not that his wounds and bruises were more serious, but that he took pleasure in being there. As he prepared to leave, the lady brought forth a horn, filled with a medicated drink of a green colour, which was so potent that his pains immediately vanished. She had done the same to Sir Grey, but no sooner had that knight reached the palace where lived the princess he loved, than his wounds opened again, and all his pains instantly returned. This was not the case with Sir Graham, whose heart was untouched by Elgiva, and was, indeed, occupied by the Lady Margaret.

Now, when Sir Graham had returned to Grantchester, and had related his adventure and discomfiture, the princess laughed and said, "It seems to me that Sir Greyskin is now Number One hundred and-forty, and therefore my intended. I will send him my ring." The princess had a little footpage. She held out to him a ring and said, "Run at nightfall to Wandlebury and see if Sir Greyskin will take it."

The boy obeyed, and when he returned he said, "I came within the embankments, and the wind was whistling and the stars shining frostily overhead; and I called and said, 'A fair lady sends a knight a ring.' Then I heard a hollow voice reply, 'A knight accepts it. Tell the fair lady I will come on my grey horse and fetch her away.'"

When Elgiva heard this, she was frightened. She had sent this ring in a spirit of bravado, and now the spectre knight had taken her ring, and would claim her as his bride.

It must now be told that Sir Grey, full of melancholy after his defeat and loss of a finger, had wandered about the country without finding rest for his troubled mind, or diversion of thought.

One frosty day he had walked as far as a range of low chalk hills which are now called the Gogmagogs, and he had seated himself on the side. The weather being very cold, he resolved to make himself a fire, and as there were abundance of flints about, he took one to strike a spark from it, therewith to kindle a bundle of sticks and fern that he had collected in an old quarry. He said to himself as he struck the flint, "Hard is the heart of her I love, as the flinty stone."

As he was warming himself at the fire, he saw drops of clear water falling into it. He looked up, and observed icicles hanging from the chalk-rock, and the heat of the fire was melting them. Then he said, "Cold as the icicle is the heart of her I love so well." Then he fell into sad musing, and perceived near his feet in a sheltered spot, exposed to the sun, a dandelion flower. Not much considering what he did, he plucked it, and a white, milky fluid flowed from the stem. When he put the stem to his mouth, he found the juice was exceeding bitter and unpalatable. Then he said, "Gall-bitter, I trow, as the drops that flow from the dandelion flower, is the heart of the lady in Grantchester bower."

When he considered what course he should pursue he could arrive at no decision. He knew that for his peace it would be better were he away, and yet he had not the courage to tear himself from the presence and society of the beautiful Elgiva.

The story now returns to the princess.

When she heard that the spectre knight from Wandlebury was coming to demand her, then she bade all her maidens sit up at night, and she lighted seven blessed candles, made of wax that had been brought from Palestine, and none dare speak above a whisper. Now they waited through the night till the moon rose, and, at the very moment that the moon began to mount and send a flood of silver over the frosty marshes and the slow-moving Cam, they all heard the sound of horse-hoofs, and a rattle as of armour and bones together.

Elgiva and her maidens held their breath. Then they heard the horse-hoofs and rattle of bones and armour cease under the window, and next moment a hollow voice sang—

"Oh, do you sleep or wake, fair may,
And do you watch for me?
I bring the ring for the gay wedding
That we shall make presently."

Then she answered—

"Oh, you must say what is the church
Where you with me will wed."

He said—

"It is a green and ancient how
That stands on pillars red."

Then she cried out—

"I will not wed in a green, green how,
For no saint's name doth it bear;
It hath no altar, it hath no pall,
Nor psalm is ever sung there."

But he sang—

"Then we shall be married beside the road
Beneath the gallows tree,
For there a priest doth swing in chains
To say Benedicite."

She replied—

"I will not be married beside the road,
Nor under the gallows tree;
And I will have my merry bridesmaids,
By one, by two, and by three."

Then there was a light from behind the hall; and this was caused by one of the maidens whom Elgiva had sent privately to kindle a great heap of straw that lay there.

When the phantom knight saw the bright glow, he thought that the sun was rising, and he cried out—

"I must away, the dawn awakes,
  I smell the morning air;
The sun doth rise and dazzle my eyes,
  And I have far to fare."

Then they heard the clatter of his horse-hoofs and the rattle of his arms as he galloped away.

Next night it was the same thing. Again the maidens assembled, and seven candles were lighted, and all waited, greatly afraid, for they expected Sir Greyskin to arrive.

And, indeed, no sooner did the moon appear, than they heard the clatter along the road, and the sound of bones and armour shaking together.

He halted under the window, and, as on the previous night, he called out—

"Oh, do you sleep or wake, fair may?
  And do you watch for me?
I bring the ring for the gay wedding
  That we shall make presently.'

Then she answered—

"Oh, where is spread the wedding feast?
  And what is on the board?
Is't ale as fits a villain's cup,
  Or wine as fits a lord?"

He replied—

"There's neither ale nor wine, my love,
There be no cups at all.
The cold, cold dew that trickleth down
Into our mouths shall fall."

She then asked—

"And who shall be the guests to-night?
And be they many or few?
And who the minstrels that shall play?
And be there link-boys too?"

He replied—

"The guests they are the moldiwarp,
The cricket, and the snail.
The death-watch it shall music make.
Our lights—the glow-worm pale."

At that moment, a sound, shrill and harsh, was heard from behind the hall. It was occasioned by one of the maidens who had a very rasping voice. Elgiva had sent her previously to the back yard to crow like a cock.

Then Sir Greyskin started and said—

"I must away, the cock he crows,
I smell the morning air;
The clarion shrill from o'er the hill
Bids me afar to fare."

Then they heard the clatter of the horse-hoofs and the rattle of his arms as he galloped away.

Now, as it drew to the third evening, Elgiva grew greatly alarmed. She could think of no other device for ridding herself of the undesired bridegroom. So she sent for Sir Grey, and told him of her distress, and how that the spectre knight was coming again, and would infallibly carry her off, unless she could devise some way of getting rid of him. He asked that he and Sir Graham might help to keep her company that night, and do what they could to protect her against Sir Greyskin.

She gladly consented; and now a large company was assembled, awaiting the arrival of the unwelcome ghostly visitor.

No sooner did the moon appear, than the clatter of horse-hoofs was heard, and the rattle of old rusty armour and bones, and presently Sir Greyskin drew up beneath Elgiva's window, and sang as before—

"Oh, do you sleep or wake, fair may?
And do you watch for me?
I bring the ring for the gay wedding
That we shall make presently."

Then she asked—

"Oh, what shall be my bridal dress
Wherein I shall be sped?"

He answered—

"Oh, that shall be a winding sheet
To wrap thee feet and head."

Then she went to the window and said, "I pray you let me alone, and leave me."

But he answered, "I will not let thee alone, nor leave thee."

Then she said, "I pray you, is there nothing you will take in place of me?"

And he said, "Nothing."

Then she said, "I adjure you by the seven candles of blessed wax from Palestine, say, is there nothing you will take instead of me?"

Then he sang—

"Go, fetch me light from a dungeon deep,
Squeeze water from a stone,
And milk me milk from a yellow cow
That ne'er on feet did run."

Now, when he sang this, then Sir Grey went to the window. He had a flint-stone in his pocket, and he thought that surely out of the depth of the flinty stone, as from a dungeon, he could bring up a light, so he drew his dagger.

The spectre knight, seated on his grey horse below the window, looked up and said—

"Go, fetch me light from a dungeon deep."

Thereat Sir Grey struck the flint with his dagger, and a spark flashed forth and lit up the ashen, upturned face of the spectre.

He uttered a howl of disappointment and rage, and threw something which fell on the floor at Sir Grey's feet, and it was his finger.

Then the phantom knight cried shrilly—

"Squeeze water from a stone!"

Now, as Sir Grey was at the window, he had seen icicles hanging from the eaves, and he put forth his hand, took one, and, holding it in his palm, it dissolved, and the drops fell over Sir Greyskin. Indeed, he was melting or squeezing water out of what was hard as crystal stone.

Thereat the spectre uttered a howl of disappointed rage, and threw something which fell on the floor—and it was Sir Graham's finger.

Then the phantom knight cried—

"Go, milk me milk from a yellow cow
That ne'er on feet did run."

Now, Sir Grey considered, and remembered the dandelion which, when he had plucked, he had set in his cap. This he now took forth, and pressed the stalk so that the bitter milk ran out, and dropped into the eyes of the spectre below.

When he felt the drops, and saw that his demands were answered, he uttered a yell of rage and flung something that fell on the floor and rolled to the feet of Elgiva, and it was her ring.

Then said Sir Graham, "I remember how wonderful was the effect of the green elixir of the Lady Margaret. I dare be sworn, if she were to put on our fingers and anoint them with a salve, and give us to drink of the horn, we should be sound."

So the Lady Margaret was fetched in all haste, and it was as Sir Graham said. She healed both him and Sir Grey, so that none could have said their fingers had been cut off.

Then the princess said to Sir Grey, "Number One hundred and forty-one, here is my hand."

"Nay, princess—I am One hundred and forty."

"How can that be?"

"I cannot count myself as conquered by Sir Greyskin, as I have conquered him, and added him and his numbers."

"But he defeated you."

"Yes, but my second victory neutralises the first. I cannot, and will not be regarded as having conquered myself."

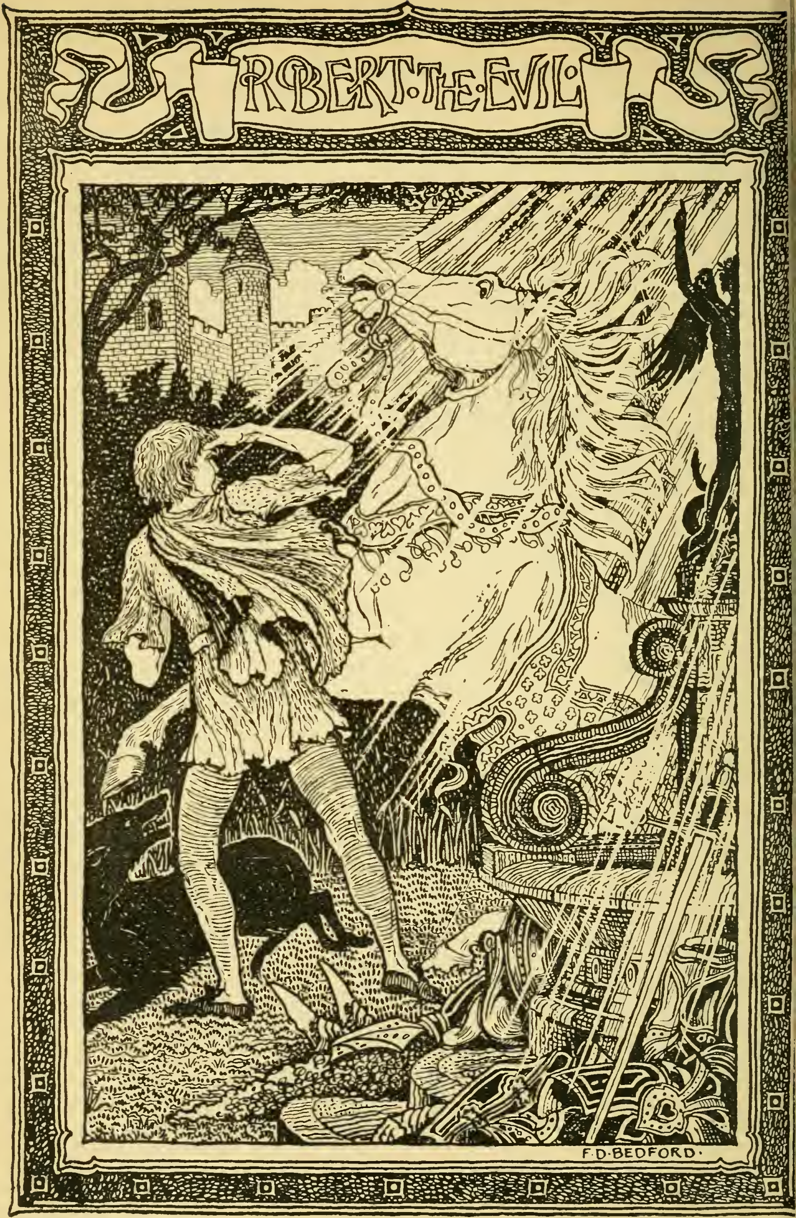
"There is a difficulty, I see," said Elgiva; "but let us settle it thus. You had two rounds with the spectre knight; in the first you contended with physical strength, the second round was a contest of intellect—but the two make up but one fight. Right. Number One hundred and forty, here is my hand."

"And here is mine," said the Lady Margaret to Sir Graham.

NOTE.—The story of Sir Grey, Sir Graham, and Sir Greyskin is a combination of the metrical romance of "Sir Eger, Sir Graham, and Sir Graysteel," which is imperfect, and of which one copy alone remains, and also of a story given by Gervase of Tilbury in *Otia Imperalia*, written in 1211. The story of Sir Eger and the rest was very popular in the early part of the sixteenth century, as is evident from the manner in which it is mentioned in the *Complaynt of Scotland*, first published in 1549. In the metrical romance, of which Ellis gives a summary, Sir Graysteel is not a ghostly knight; he is actually killed by Sir Graham. I hope that I have not offended the purists by identifying him with the ghostly knight of Gervase. The latter distinctly localises the event at Cambridge, but gives, as the name of the ancient encampment, Wandlebury—"in Anglia ad terminos Eliensis est castrum, Cantabrica nomine, cujus limites e vicino locus est, quem Wandlebiriam dicunt."

No such name remains now near Cambridge, and I should conjecture that this was an old name for the prehistoric camp with mound that was occupied later by the Norman castle.

For notes on this story see Liebrecht's *Collection of Extracts from the Otia Imperalia*, Hanover, 1856. I have likewise worked in a scrap of the old ballad of "The Unquiet grave."


ROBERT·THE·EVIL·
F·D·BEDFORD·

XVI

ROBERT THE EVIL

THERE lived in Normandy a duke named Hubert. He was a brave and a courteous man, and he loved peace though he was so brave, and cared rather for the happiness of his people than for making himself a name through exploits of war.

He was married to the daughter of the Duke of Burgundy, and but one thing interfered with their perfect happiness, and that was that they were childless. They were both devout in their duties to God, and they built hospitals and cared for the sick and the poor. Fourteen years had they been together, and there was no child. The duke's heart was sad, but the duchess was the most sad, because she was not only herself disappointed, but she saw also that it troubled her husband greatly.

One day he was out hunting, and he said to himself, "How is it that so many husbands and wives have children and to spare, and I and my wife have none?"

Now it happened that whilst he was saying this, the duchess was sitting in her garden, and was weeping, and she said to herself, "There is many a poor wife, who can hardly feed her children, has got a large family, and I who am rich have none. How is that?"

As she thought and spoke with herself, she picked with her fingers at a bit of old wall against which she was leaning her arm. It was made up of small stones and bits of tile and of flint pebbles, set in mortar. She had picked out several of these before she became aware that she had pulled out a tile that covered a little hole, and that something like smoke was issuing from this small hole. The smoke-like substance came out as if it were blown from a pipe, and it spread out before her, and then she saw that it was a dense cloud of tiny black flies; and these flies all gathered close to each other till she could see no light between them, and to her infinite terror she discovered that the smoke-cloud was contracting into the figure of a dark man. She could see no features, only a general form, and through it all was an endless whirling and traversing of black flies.

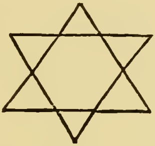
She was so frightened that she could not speak. She looked at the great shadow-like figure before her and trembled.

Then she heard a voice say to her, "I will give to you a son on one condition—that one of my flies may enter his heart and lodge there."

When the shadow-form spoke thus, with a voice like the humming of myriads of flies, then the duchess plucked up courage, and she said, " Give me a son, and I will allow one of your flies to enter and lodge in his heart."

Then all at once the swarm of flies scattered, and the outline of the form was gone, and the duchess started to her feet. She thought she had been dreaming.

At her feet lay the little tile she had picked out of the wall. She stooped, took it up, and saw that it bore a singular stamp like this—



Now, as the duke rode a-hunting, he came all at once to a dead hind, that lay in the depth of the wood. He was alone. Above the carcase was an innumerable swarm of flies, so thick that it was as smoke wavering in the wind. At first he thought that the dead beast was on fire, but he soon assured himself that this was a cloud of mosquitoes above it. He drew up his horse and looked on in wonder. Then he saw the cloud of flies contract into a form, twice as tall as that of a man; he could see no features, only a maze of twirling mites of flies in the shape of a man.

Then he heard a voice issue from this cloud-form, and it said, " I will give you a son if you will allow one of my midgets to drop one tiny mite of poison into his blood."

When the duke heard this, he almost laughed, and he said, "I want a son indeed, and the sting of a mosquito will do him no harm. I grant it."

Then all at once the cloud-form dissolved, the flies scattered, and the duke saw no more.

Well, it came to pass, some time after this, that the Duchess of Normandy became the mother of a little baby boy.

Then she was full of joy, but also full of alarm, for she remembered what she had promised.

She had the finest muslin curtains drawn over the windows, lest any flies should enter, and over the baby's crib were also fine muslin curtains stretched; and she ordered eight ladies-in-waiting to watch, four by day and four by night, with fans in their hands, to drive away all flies from her babe. Not a fly was to be seen in the room, and the duchess gave strictest orders that no cobwebs were to be swept down by the housemaids.

She believed that her babe would be safe when it was baptized, but that till its christening it was subject to the danger of the fly entering it.

The day for the baptism had arrived. The weather was so sultry that the windows were opened, but the muslin curtains remained close drawn.

Suddenly, all saw a flash of lightning, and then heard a crash of thunder so loud that they thought the castle must have been struck. The duchess nearly fainted with fear. The ladies-in-waiting desisted from fanning the child.

Then a blast of wind rushed in, tore the muslin curtains asunder, and in the wind came a little black fly with a long-legged mosquito on its back, trumpeting triumphantly.

Before the duchess and her ladies could recover themselves, the black fly had lighted on the child's lips and had crept into its mouth, and the mosquito danced on to the little white brow of the babe and stung it there.

The child was now taken to church, and was baptized by the name of Robert. All the way to church, and all the way back, he did nothing but howl and struggle.

Never had nurses so bad a time as they had with this child. He grew his teeth quicker than do most babes, and when he had them, he bit his nurses. He delighted also in scratching them with his sharp nails.

Before the year was out, he could run about, and by the time he was three could talk. The older he grew, the more mischievous he became. No governess could exercise any control over him. When he played with other children, he struck them with his fists, pulled out their hair, and kicked them.

Often the boys in the street assembled to fight him, but no sooner did he appear, than their courage failed and they ran away, screaming, "Robert the Evil is coming after us!" just as sheep are scattered by a wolf. At last no one called him anything else but Robert the Evil.

Thus Robert grew up to be a big boy. The barons of Normandy, when they saw his violence, were right glad, for they thought he would make a warlike duke, and they were weary of the peace that reigned under his father, the good Duke Hubert. They thought that this was merely boyish spirit; but at last they also found that his evil disposition was too much for them. Just as noxious weeds grow strong, so did the evil tempers and mischief-loving caprice of Robert. Nothing pleased him more than to run about the streets with a stick, beating people, breaking windows, and behaving like a madman.

The duke was much distressed. He called his son to him and said, "It is high time that this disorderly life should come to an end. I am going to give you a tutor to instruct you in good manners, and to teach you your duty to God and to men."

Robert was obliged to submit; and a good and painstaking tutor was appointed. But one day, when this master was rebuking Robert for neglect, the boy drew a knife, fell on his tutor and stabbed him, so that he sank down in his blood on the floor.

After that no man could be got who would undertake the office of tutor to Robert. His parents were obliged to leave him to himself, to follow his own course, for he would not listen to them any more than to anyone else.

He refused to learn anything, he mocked at all that is holy, and not only would he not go to church himself, but on Sundays he threw mud and stones at those who were going to the house of God.

When the duke saw how that his son went on from evil to evil, he wished that Robert had never been born; and he thought now of the black poison of the mosquito that had entered his blood and corrupted it. The duchess also was full of grief that she had been given a son who caused her shame and misery, and she thought it was occasioned by the fly that was harboured in his heart.

One day she said to her husband, "Our son is now old enough and able-bodied: it seems to me that it would be well to dub him knight, perhaps that may have some effect on him, and cause him to amend his wicked ways."

The duke consented, though Robert was then but eighteen years old.

On Whitsunday the duke assembled the barons and nobles of the land, and summoned his son before the great gathering. After he had discussed his project with his council, he thus addressed his son: "Robert, hearken to what, at the advice of my best friends, I say to you before all this great company. It is my purpose to dub you knight, that henceforth you may associate with honourable men, and may exercise yourself in acquiring knightly virtues, and that you may strive to change your manner of life, which grieves and offends all men."

Robert answered, "Father, do as you will. I care nothing whether I am a knight or not. As my heart prompts or my head advises, so will I act."

Then he strode out of the hall of assembly, in such a humour that with his cudgel he struck down everyone who was in his way, cutting open the heads of some, and maiming others in their limbs.

However, his father insisted, and next day he was dubbed knight, and the duke ordered a tournament to be held, in which the knights might tilt at each other with blunt spears.

Robert at once entered the lists, drew his sword, overthrew knight after knight, fighting and raging like a lion. He broke the arm of one, the leg of another, and the neck of a third. Not one who ventured before him came off uninjured; and he rode with such force and fury that he rode ten horses to death. The duke in vain ordered the sports to close. Robert would not attend. He galloped about in mad fury, running down horse and man, dealing out savage blows, and in this one day killed three of the boldest knights of the land, beside having wounded many.

He would not desist so long as any man remained within the lists; then he spurred his horse, which leaped the barrier, and he rode away into the open country in search of adventures.

After this he did not return to his father's castle, but gathered a number of evil-doers about him, and conducted himself worse than ever, riding about the country ravaging it, not sparing churches, the old, the young, the feeble.

Messengers came to the duke from all sides with complaints against Robert. He had burnt one man's harvest, he had killed another man, he had robbed a church.

The duke was in the utmost distress and doubt what to do. He knelt down and prayed to God, whom he had so often asked to give him a son, that now, in his shame and sorrow of heart, He would show him the means whereby his grief might be assuaged, and his son recovered from such a life of wickedness.

Then one of his worthy old servants came to him, and said, " Dear master, let me give you my advice. Send messengers to summon Robert to come before you. Then address him in the presence of your kinsmen and nobles, and bid him change his mode of life; and threaten him, unless he does so, to proceed against him as you would against any ordinary criminal. Throw him into prison, bring him before justice—and deal with him as the law requires, without respect of person."

The duke thanked the man for his advice, and promised to follow it.

The duke accordingly sent messengers to his son. These arrived before Robert, and were ill received by him. He had their eyes put out, and said mockingly, " Now, sirs, you will sleep all the better ! "

The blinded messengers returned to the duke, and told him all.

The duke was very angry, and considered how he could bring his son under restraint.

He sent in all haste messengers into all parts of the land, and ordered the officers and governors to take all measures in their power to protect the land against Robert, to secure his person, and to deliver him over to him, his father.

When Robert and his company heard that the whole country was rising in arms against them, they were greatly alarmed. But Robert ground his teeth, and vowed that he would carry on war against his own father, and that he would devastate the whole land before him.

For their immediate protection, he withdrew his band of robbers into a deep forest, in a wild and rocky region, remote from towns and villages, and there he built himself a strong castle. Numerous ruffians came to him there, murderers, thieves, highwaymen, and all those whose crimes banished them from the company of ordinary men.

From his headquarters in the forest Robert burst forth and waylaid and attacked merchants on their way from one town to another. He robbed them of everything, and killed all he robbed.

The country was panic-stricken. No man ventured along the road, for fear of Robert and his band. When the freebooters returned to their stronghold, they lived in riot and revelry, and made every day one of festivity.

One day Robert rode forth alone in the forest. It so happened that he fell in with seven hermits, old and pious men, who were on their way through it. Out of mere savagery and wantonness, Robert rode at the old men, brandishing his sword, trampled them under his horse's hoofs, and cut them down with his sword. When they saw him charging at them, they knelt down and prayed that he might be forgiven.

When all were dead, he laughed and said, "There, I have given martyrs' crowns to these seven saints. What more could they have desired?"

After this horrible crime, he left the forest. All his garments were stained with blood, and he looked like a butcher from the shambles.

As he thus rode along the land, he approached the castle of Arques, and learned from a shepherd that his mother was there. She had arrived that day.

He at once turned his horse's head in the direction of the castle, moved by some dark and uncertain impulse. But as he approached and people saw him, all fled from him, like hares from a hound. Some shut themselves up in their houses, others took refuge in the church.

For the first time it struck Robert that he was an object of aversion and horror to people. "What!' said he; "am I the plague, that everyone turns pale and flies before me?"

Occupied with this thought, he drew up at the castle gate, sprang from his horse, and called to the ostlers to take it. But no servant dared approach, and he was obliged himself to attach his horse to a ring in the wall.

Then, with his sword all stained with blood in his hand, he strode into the castle.

When the duchess, his mother, saw Robert enter, and approach her with the sword drawn in his hand, she turned to run away; but Robert called out to her, "Dear mother, why do you try to escape? I will not harm you. Stand and speak to me, I pray you."

Then he approached her with his sword lowered, and said to her, "Mother, tell me, I pray you, why I am unlike all others, that I am so furious and bent on evil continually. Sometimes I know it is all bad; but my furious passions drive me on, just as a leaf is blown by a hurricane."

Then the duchess said, weeping, "My son, I am to blame, as is also your father. We despaired of having a son, and were rebellious against the will of God. Then all at once a mysterious dark spirit stood before us, before me in the garden, and afterwards before your father in the forest, and promised that we should have a son if I would allow him to send a black fly into your heart, and if your father would allow one to drop deadly poison into your blood. This, we believe, is the reason why you have so much evil in your heart, and so much fire in your blood, and that your thoughts are only to do evil continually. Now, I kneel, I feel I am guilty—raise your sword and strike off my head."

Then Robert said, "Mother, is there no way by which the black fly may be dislodged from my heart, and the poison be driven out of my blood?"

The duchess said, "I have sent for seven holy hermits who have lived in desert places, serving God in fastings and prayers. They have been to me to-day, and I told them all my sorrow, and your father's, and asked them their advice."

Then Robert was dismayed, for it was even these men who had come at his mother's request that he had killed, and it was with their blood that his sword and his garments were stained.

His mother went on to say, "I spake with these holy men, and they were all of one and the same opinion. They said that the black fly lived on evil deeds done,—blood that is shed, houses broken into and robbed, harvests destroyed,—and that the only way in which you could rid yourself of the black fly was to starve him out."

"And how is that to be done?" asked Robert.

"By doing no more deeds of violence. Then after a while he will be forced to leave, or he will perish for want of food."

"And the poison drop in my blood?" asked Robert.

"That, said they, could only be expelled by prayer and fasting."

"Oh, you good mother," said Robert, "I thank you for what you have said. Hitherto I have used every effort to feed and fatten the black fly, and I have let the poison in my blood drive me about as it would. Now I will use all my efforts to drive out the black fly, and to conquer and expel the poison from my blood."

Without further words, Robert left the presence of his mother, and the castle of Arques.

The duchess hastened to Rouen to her husband, and told him all. The duke said, "It is in vain. How can he make amends for all the evil he has done? I cannot trust Robert, I believe that this is a mere caprice of the moment, and he will break out again into worse violence than before. Yet I pray to my merciful God, to hold him to his good purpose."

Robert rode back to his fortress in the forest, and there found all his companions at table.

As soon as they saw him, they stood up and cheered him, and bade him take his place and drink and be drunken with them.

But Robert would not seat himself; he stood, and said, "Comrades, hearken what I have to say. You know that the life we have led brings destruction to soul and body. We are all hurrying on the way to outer darkness, and there is no hope for us unless we turn from our evil ways and repent. Therefore I bid you do as I do, give up this bad life, and seek to recompense for the past."

Then they all burst out laughing, they thought he was mocking. But he persisted in what he said.

Then one stood up and said, "Listen to our captain! Who is the worst among us all? Who shows least mercy? Who leads us into the greatest crimes?"

Robert answered, "That is true. I have led you wrong; now let me lead you aright."

Then another robber called out, "Master! you speak to deaf walls. Neither I nor the rest of us will leave off our life of robbery and murder because you desire it. We do not like a peaceful state of affairs. We have no taste for honest work. We are brigands, and brigands we will remain to our dying day."

All praised these words, and shouted, "If we have been bad hitherto, we will be worse in the future."

When Robert heard their resolve, he said not another word to them. He bolted the door, took up a cudgel, and laid about him with all his might, and did not desist till he had knocked down and killed all the gang. Then he said, "I have paid you all for your services as ye deserved. As is the master, so is his pay."

Then Robert put the key of his castle in his pocket, and went his way.

He rode on his horse, and left the wood, and travelled on till he was overcome with hunger.

Towards evening he drew near to a monastery, the abbot of which was a kinsman. Robert had done much harm to the possessions of this abbey; and now, as he approached, everyone fled before him. He rode up to the gates, and, kneeling there, begged that the abbot would speak with him. The monks were so frightened that they advised the abbot to have nothing to do with him. However, he went to the gate, and then Robert was so earnest in his profession of desire to amend his evil life, that the abbot opened the wicket and let him in. He gave him food and quarters for the night, and much good advice.

Next morning Robert said to the abbot, " I have a commission wherewith I charge you. Here is the key of my castle. Take it to my father, and tell him that within are all the things we have taken from churches and castles, as well as those things of which we have despoiled merchants and peasants. Tell him to divide the spoil among those whom we have plundered."

Then Robert left his horse and his sword behind, and went on his way on foot.

He wandered over hill and vale, very weary and footsore, and did not rest till he reached the cell of a holy hermit who lived on a rock above the sea.

He asked him to take him in and advise him what he must do. He told him what an evil life had been his, how that the black fly was lodged in his heart, and the poison boiled in his veins. He told him how he had stabbed his tutor when he was a boy, and had mocked at religion, and how he had maltreated all who came near to him; how he had broken legs and arms and necks in the tournament when dubbed knight; how he had gathered about him a band of miscreants; and he told him all that ever he had done, down to the murder of the seven holy hermits, who had been to advise his mother concerning him.

Then the hermit said to him, "My son, I will prepare you a bed, and I will think and pray about you all night, and tell you in the morning what you must do."

So he gave to Robert some of his frugal meal, and strewed him a bed of fern leaves and heather, and Robert cast himself on it and fell asleep.

Now in the night the old hermit had a dream. He thought that the whole cell was full of light, and that he saw an angel in the midst of the light, and the angel said to him, "This is what Robert must do to prove his repentance, and to learn to obtain complete mastery over himself. He must behave himself as a fool, and as if he were dumb. He must eat no meat but what is cast to the dogs, and this life he must continue to lead, till it be revealed to him that his repentance is accepted, when the black fly will crawl out of his mouth, and the poison will come away from his thigh in a drop of black blood."

When the hermit heard this, he was sore amazed and dismayed.

Next morning he was very silent. Robert asked him whether he had any opinion to pass on what he was to do. He saw that the aged man was distressed, and he urged him to speak out and declare what he had to say.

Then the hermit wept, and said to him, " Last night I saw an angel, and he told me that you must comport yourself as a fool, and as if you had lost your speech, and eat only what is cast to dogs. A sign from heaven will be given to show when your repentance is accepted, and then the black fly will leave your heart, and the poison drop will distil from your blood."

Robert hearkened meekly, and thanked the hermit, and promised to do as he was bidden.

Then he left the cell and went his way, not knowing whither he went, and as he walked, he jumped and ran, and behaved like a crazy fellow.

When he was in a village or town, the children ran after him, mocking, and pelting him with stones. The people also looked out of their windows at him and laughed at his antics.

So he went from place to place, and all he ate was what was cast to the dogs in the street till he came to Paris, where the Emperor Charlemagne held court.

Seeing the palace door open, Robert ran into the hall where the emperor was, and jumped about from side to side, never remaining for one moment in the same spot.

Charles the Great saw him and said, " There is a fine young man, who looks like a knight, but seems to be crazy. Bid him sit down and eat and drink."

The emperor's steward brought Robert to a table, and placed before him meat, bread, and wine; but he would touch nothing.

Whilst Charlemagne was eating, he threw a bone to a dog which lay under the table. Instantly Robert sprang from his place and pursued the dog, to take the bone from him. The dog would not let go his spoil, so both gnawed at the same bone, one at each end. The emperor, and all in the hall who saw this, laughed aloud.

At last Robert got the upper hand, and kept the bone for himself, and lay down on the floor and gnawed it, for he was very hungry, not having eaten anything for a long time.

When the emperor saw how hungry he was, he threw a slice of bread to another dog. Robert took this also, but divided it in half, and gave one half to the dog. This also provoked much laughter, and the emperor said to his men, "This is the funniest fool I have ever seen. He takes from the dogs their food, but will not eat anything offered him. By this one can see that he is a genuine fool."

The servants of Charlemagne now gave the dogs all the remains of the meats, so that Robert might be satisfied; and that they might have sport in watching him.

At last Robert stood up and began to run and jump about, and strike at the walls, the pillars, the dogs, the benches, with a stick he had in his hand. Whilst so doing he saw an open door leading into a sweet garden. He ran out and found a beautiful fountain in the midst of the garden. To this he went and drank of the water.

As night approached, he went with the dogs to the place where they slept, which was under the stairs; and he lay down among them. The emperor heard of this, and ordered a feather bed to be carried to him, but Robert made signs that he would not have it, so it was taken away. The emperor was not a little surprised when his servants returned with the soft bed, and he ordered them to litter plenty of straw on the ground where Robert was.

They did this, and Robert threw himself down in the clean straw, among the dogs, and soon fell fast asleep.

Thus it came about that Robert, the son of a mighty duke, who had been accustomed to lie on a good bed and eat of the best food, freely by the force of his own will, assisted by the grace of God, renounced all comforts and all honour, to eat with the dogs under the table, and sleep with the dogs under the stair, so that he might learn self-conquest, and give proof of his resolution to break with his evil habits, and conquer what was evil in his nature. For, indeed, there was in Robert what was bad, but also something that was good, as is the case with all the sons of Adam; only in Robert there was a greater force of evil than in most men, because of the black fly in his heart and the black blood in his veins.

But if there was this great evil in him, there was in him also a strong and resolute will, and the seeds of what is good and great and noble. And what happened to Robert may happen to every one of us: if we will, by God's help we can conquer the evil and encourage the good.

Now listen to what follows.

In this fashion Robert continued to live, a laughing-stock to the court, kindly regarded and much pitied by the emperor, and dearly loved by the dogs with whom he associated, especially by one old hound who lay near him on the straw, and who would have allowed himself to be killed, rather than be separated from Robert.

It came to pass that the Emperor Charles the Great had a young and beautiful daughter, who was dumb.

The king's seneschal had often asked the emperor to give her to him as wife, but Charlemagne would not consent to this, because he thought that although his daughter was dumb, yet she deserved a noble husband, and not a mere servant.

This so angered the seneschal that he left the court and went to the Saracens in Spain, and intrigued with them to invade Gaul and make war on the great emperor.

This was all done so privately that suddenly the army of the Saracens crossed the Pyrenees and poured down on the fruitful plains of Aquitaine before the emperor was aware that war was menaced, and before he had collected an army sufficiently large to oppose the infidels.

The Arabs poured over the south, and burned and destroyed and slaughtered everywhere without pity.

Then Charles assembled his great nobles and thus addressed them: "My lords, give me good counsel, that we may withstand these heathen dogs which have wasted our land; wherefore I take great thought, for they keep all my land under their subjection, and they will bring us to confusion, if that God, out of His endless mercy, help us not; wherefore I pray you, everyone, to go fight with them with all your power and might, and drive them away."

Then answered the lords and knights all with one assent, saying, "Sovereign lord, your counsel is good and wise, therefore we be ready all to go with you, and give them battle, and defend our right, and relieve the land."

The emperor thanked them for this answer, and was glad, and made proclamation throughout all the country, that every man, old and young, who was able to bear arms should make ready to fight against the Saracens.

Great numbers of men assembled about the emperor, who placed himself at the head of the host, and marched forth against the enemy.

Now the old story says: "And for all that the emperour had moche mo people than the seneschall, yet the seneschall had wonne the felde, hadde not God of His grace sente theder Robert to resyste and helpe them in theyr grete necessyte."

On the very day on which the Emperor Charles marched against the Saracens, it happened that Robert went into the garden of the palace where was the fountain, and he sat on the margin sorrowful, thinking of the great danger run by the emperor and his Christian men, and how unable he was to help. Then all at once he heard a voice from heaven, that said, " Robert, make haste! arm thyself, mount and fly to the assistance of the emperor and the Christian host."

Robert started to his feet in great astonishment. There was a flash as of lightning, and he saw before him a snow-white horse, richly harnessed, and on the breasting of the fountain a complete suit of silver armour, and a shield on which was blazoned a red cross above a crescent.

Now it happened that there stood at a window the dumb princess, and she was looking into the garden when this happened, and she saw the great light and the sudden apparition of the horse and the armour, and she further saw Robert don the armour, mount the horse, and ride away.

If she had been able to speak, she would have told her ladies what she had seen, but as she was dumb, she kept it locked up in her heart.

Robert, in full armour, gleaming with light, on the snow-white horse, galloped into the camp of the Christians; and arrived just at the moment when the army of the Franks was hard pressed by the enemy, and was beginning to waver.

When, however, Robert appeared, and the enemy saw his flashing armour, and felt the strokes of his mighty arm and sword that shone as lightning, they were filled with panic, and recoiled. The Christians plucked up courage, recovered lost ground, and charged with shouts and levelled spears. The result was a victory.

The ground was strewn with the dead of the Saracens, and the Franks put the invaders to flight.

No sooner was Robert assured that the victory was won, than he galloped back to Paris, and to the garden of the emperor. Having reached the fountain, he descended from the saddle, when, instantly horse and harness vanished, and Robert was but the poor ragged fool he had been before.

The emperor's daughter saw this from her window. Fain would she have spoken, had her tongue been loosed.

Robert had received a scar on the face in the battle, otherwise he was unhurt.

The emperor now returned in triumph to Paris, and all the bells of all the churches rang out joyously. He went at the head of his troops to the cathedral, and thanked God for the assistance rendered him.

When the evening banquet began, then Robert was in the hall as usual, performing his wonted antics, mute and crazy as before. The emperor was glad to see his fool again, but when he observed the scar on his face, he was vexed, and said, "I see that there are envious people in my court who have taken advantage of my absence to wound my poor good fool. It is true that he is a fool, but he is one who does no man an injury." Then the emperor issued orders that no one should molest Robert at any time.

However, he had other matters to think of, and he began to talk with his nobles about the great victory, and to ask who that was on the white horse and in the silver armour, who had rendered such assistance that day. As none could inform him, Charles said, " I know not who he be, but this I know of him, that he is the bravest and finest knight I ever saw."

The princess was present, and heard these words. She drew nigh to her father and made a sign to him, pointing to Robert, so as to show who it was who had ridden to the assistance of the Christian army. He could not understand what she meant, so he summoned her nurse, who had been with her from infancy, to explain to him what his daughter desired to say. The nurse, after watching her signs, told Charlemagne that the princess desired to inform him that Robert the fool was he who had brought such unexpected and powerful assistance to the army.

The emperor laughed heartily at this, and said, " Verily my daughter is as great a fool as is he." But then he became angry, and said to the nurse, " Instead of training my child to be sensible, you encourage her to give way to all kinds of nonsensical ideas."

When the princess heard this, she made no further signs, although she well knew that what she wanted to say was the truth. She went away in sadness of heart.

After a while the Arabs had collected their forces again, and once more advanced against Paris. Again the emperor at the head of his Franks marched against them, and this time also would have been defeated unless the White Knight had come, as before, to his assistance and that of the hard pressed Christian host. This time also, Robert turned the battle into a rout of the enemy.

When the battle was over, no one knew what had become of the White Knight; for, although the emperor sent his men to observe which way he went, yet he had vanished before they could come up with him; and only the princess knew who he was.

A short time after this, fresh forces of the Arabs crossed the Pyrenees, and the remnant of the defeated host united with them; and now the army was so great that the seneschal and the Saracen captain at the head of the army hoped to recover all they had lost; and they marched for the third time on Paris.

Before the Emperor Charles went forth to battle, he gave orders to some of his knights to closely observe the White Knight, should he again appear, and to surround him and bring him before his throne. They promised to do this, and when the day of battle came, several of them hid in a wood by the way, and waited for the coming of the White Knight.

But this was in vain. Before they were aware, Robert was in the midst of the fight. Then the knights followed him, dealing strokes of their swords right and left, but none did such wonders as Robert. The enemy was unable to withstand this onslaught, and the Saracen host broke up and scattered in greater confusion than before.

When the battle was over, and all set their faces to return home, Robert also resolved to gallop back to the well in the garden, there to release himself from his armour as heretofore. But the knights who had been ordered to watch and secure him had returned to the wood, and were awaiting him. When, therefore, they beheld him riding towards Paris, they drew up across his way, and called out to him, "Gallant knight! speak to us and say who you are, and from what land you come; for the emperor desires greatly to honour and reward you." When Robert heard this, he was abashed. He struck spurs into his horse and flew away over hill and vale; for he knew that he was working out his penance, and must not speak or receive any honour from men. One of the boldest of the knights pursued him on a good horse, but, as he saw that he could not overtake him, he threw his spear after him, not with intent to hurt Robert, but to strike and arrest the white horse. However, his aim was bad, and the spear struck Robert in the thigh; the lance-head entered and made a bad wound, but the shaft broke off.

Robert rode away with the spear-barb in his thigh. Thus the knight did not discover anything, but he took up his broken spear-shaft and rode back to his companions, and all were sorrowful that he should have hurt the gallant White Knight.

Robert hastened to the fountain, and then descended from the horse and laid aside his armour; whereupon all vanished. He drew the spear-head from his thigh, and hid it between two big stones by the fountain.

Poor Robert did not know how to get his wound dressed, and he was constrained to cover it with moss, and to rip out the lining of his jacket and bind it round the wound.

Again the daughter of the emperor saw from a window all that took place; she saw what a gallant and honourable knight, and withal how modest, Robert was, and she began to regard him with tender love.

When Robert had bound up his wound, he went to the hall of the palace, to get some food; but he limped, on account of his wound; however, he endeavoured to disguise the pain he was in as best he might.

Soon after came the knight who had wounded him and related to the emperor how he had flung his spear at the White Knight, and how unwillingly he had struck him, and how that the head of the spear was left in his flesh.

"The best thing to be done, sire," said he, "is for you to utter a proclamation, and publish it throughout the empire, and if there be any knight in white harness rides a white horse, that he should be brought to your presence, and that he bring with him the spear-head wherewith he was hurt in the thigh, showing the wound, and that you give him your daughter to wife, and half your empire with her."

The emperor, hearing this, approved of his counsel, and made the proclamation and published it throughout the empire.

The proclamation came to the ears of the seneschal, who still loved the dumb princess, and who thought that an opportunity was offered him not only to obtain her, but also to recover the favour of the emperor. He had kept very secret that he was in league with the Saracens, and had been in their camp, and had stirred them up to war against Charles the Great, and he trusted that the emperor knew nothing of his treachery.

So now he procured for himself a white horse and a suit of silver armour, and he cut his thigh and thrust a broken-off lance-head into the wound. He hoped thereby to deceive the emperor, and win the princess. When he had thus done, he armed his servants and set forth for Paris with a great retinue.

On reaching the capital, he at once went to the palace, and saluted Charles the Great, and said to him, "My lord, I am he that relieved you three times in your great straits. Three times have I caused you to have honour and victory against the dogs of Saracens."

The emperor, who thought not of treason or deceit, said, "You are a valiant and wise knight; but I had not supposed it possible that you could be our deliverer, for, indeed, when you did not answer my summons to arms, I took you for forsworn and a villain."

The seneschal pretended to be very angry at this, and he said, "My lord emperor, marvail you nothing hereat, for I am not such a coward as you take me to be?"

So saying, he drew the spear-head from his thigh and showed it to the emperor.

The knight stood by who had wounded Robert, and he looked well at the iron spear-head, and was very sure it was not the same as that which he had used. But he thought advisable at that moment to say nothing, for he was afraid of the seneschal, and the emperor seemed to believe him. And, indeed, Charlemagne now showed great honour to the seneschal, and was ready to reward him for the services he thought that he had done.

And now the time had come when Robert's penance was to be ended.

He lay under the stairs on the straw, fevered with his wound, and he heard how that all was being made ready for the marriage of the false seneschal with the beautiful princess. He knew that the wicked man was claiming honour for having done that which he had never acomplished. Yet Robert did not believe that the hour of his deliverance had come. The dog that so loved him licked his wound, when Robert took off the plaster of moss. And lo! Robert saw that in the moss was a drop of poisonous black blood, that had come forth from his veins and had burned the moss wherever it touched. This he now threw away, and he knew that the end of his sorrows was near.

At this time an angel appeared to the old hermit among the rocks of Brittany, and told him all that had happened to Robert, and bade him gird up his loins and hasten to Paris, and declare to Robert that his time of trial was accomplished.

Now there arrived the wedding-day, and the princess was full of shame and grief, because she was to marry the seneschal, who pretended to have done those gallant deeds which she, and she alone, knew had been performed by the poor fool who lived under the stairs.

She wept and tore her hair and wrung her hands, but all in vain. She could not speak and tell her father why she was so unhappy, and he no longer mistrusted the seneschal, for he thought that he was bound by his word to give her to the man who had delivered himself and his army in their great peril on three several occasions.

So a great procession was formed to go to the cathedral, where the archbishop was to marry the seneschal to the princess, and all the way the poor princess wept and wrung her hands.

Now, when she stood in the church, and the marriage service began, then all at once the string of her tongue was loosed, and she cried aloud, "My father! my father! how can you believe that this wicked man and false traitor was he who assisted you? All he says is a lie. Here, in this city, even in your own palace, lives the man to whom you and all here present owe your lives. I have long known who was the White Knight; I tried once to show you what I knew, but you would not believe me."

Then all were in great marvel to hear the dumb lady speak.

And now the knight who had wounded the White Knight had the courage to speak out. "Sire," said he, "the spear-head that man drew from his thigh never belonged to my spear."

Then the archbishop, who stood before the altar, spoke out, and bade the princess declare all. But she took her father by the one hand and the archbishop by the other, and led them into the garden to the fountain, and showed them where was hidden the head of the spear. And the knight who had wounded Robert, and who followed, at once knew that this was verily the barb of his own weapon. He brought his shaft, and the spear-head and the piece of wood still attached to it fitted exactly.

Then the princess said, "Thrice have we been delivered from the heathen by the valour of this brave knight. Thrice have I seen his horse and harness, which he has resigned thrice when his work was accomplished. What has become of horse and armour, that I know not, but the man himself is here. Each time, when he had done what he was sent to do, he went and laid himself down among the dogs." To her father she said, "He it is who has saved your honour and your land. It is yours to reward him. Let us go and learn the truth from his own lips."

Then they all went to where Robert lay on the straw, and his faithful old friend the dog was licking his wound. The emperor, and the archbishop, the princess, the nobles of the land and the great ladies, all were present. They stood in the hall, on the stair, in the doorway. And when Robert saw them, he hastily drew his rags over his wound.

But the emperor said to him, "Friend, I pray you suffer us to look at the wound in your thigh. I must needs see it."

Robert now understood what Charles the Great meant, and he pretended not to comprehend. He took up the straw and began to bite and tear it, and then to toss it about and play with it, like a fool.

Then all at once, as he looked up, he saw the face of the old hermit from Brittany. The old man had entered and stood behind the emperor. Then he dropped the straw and remained motionless.

The hermit in a loud voice cried out, "Hearken unto me, you Robert; and all ye who stand by. This is the man who was called Robert the Evil, and indeed with right, for much evil had he done. But henceforth shall he be called Robert the Good, for the evil he once wrought, he will recompense with much and abundant good. And now, Robert, I declare to thee that the time of thy probation is at an end. Serve and honour God, love mankind, your brethren. And I am sent to open your mouth."

Then the hermit stood forward, and he touched Robert on the lips, and Robert opened his mouth, and forthwith there flew away from him a tiny black fly, so thin and so feeble that it seemed not to have strength to move its wings.

Then Robert fell on his knees and said, "King of Heaven, I thank Thee that I who have been the worst of sinners am suffered to arise and do Thee service in the future."

Now, when the emperor, and the archbishop, and the princess, and all who were present heard Robert speak so well and so rationally, they were filled with joy at their hearts.

Robert, however, at once bade all farewell, for he longed to return home and see his father and mother.

When he neared Normandy,—or Neustria, as it was then called,—he heard that his father was dead, and that an usurper had driven away the duchess and ruled the land with violence. Robert at once proclaimed that he was duke, and summoned the knights of the land to him, and without much difficulty he succeeded in expelling the usurper. There was great joy when his mother met him, and learned how altered a man he was.

As soon as Robert had established order and good government in his duchy, he hasted back to Paris, where a great wedding was celebrated, and he married the daughter of Charlemagne, who had been dumb, but now spoke plain.

Robert with a great retinue came to Rouen in Normandy with his wife, and the people received both with great joy.

Robert ruled in justice and with mercy, and the land had peace and flourished under his sway.

One day a messenger came to him from the emperor, to say that the seneschal, who had escaped unhurt from Paris after his treachery had been discovered, had again leagued with the Saracens, and was marching into Gaul.

Then Robert collected an army and hastened to the assistance of Charlemagne. A great battle was fought, and in it Robert with his own hand clove him from crown to shoulders by one mighty blow.

After this he returned to Normandy, and lived long in love and honour with his noble wife. He was feared by his enemies and loved by his friends and by his subjects. He died at the age of sixty-two, and was known as duke by the name of Richard the Good.

NOTE.—This is one of the noblest of mediæval romances. On it Meyerbeer based his opera of "Roberto il Diavolo." It has not hitherto been adapted for children because of a difficulty at the beginning to which objection might be taken. An attempt has been made in this version to get over the difficulty. The tale occurs in an early French metrical romance of the thirteenth century. There was also a mediæval mystery play on the same topic. The story was turned into prose and published at Lyons in 1496. The English edition was by Wynkyn de Worde, about 1490.

It has been supposed that there is some sort of historical basis for the story. Robert has been supposed to have been the son of one Aubert, first Duke of Neustria under Pepin, the father of Charlemagne, about 751. This Aubert had a wife named Inde, sister of the Duke of Burgundy, by whom he had a son called Robert, who received the bad nickname on account of the enormities committed by him in the Forest of Rouveray. Robert was the father of Richard Sans-peur, who is also a hero of romance. The stories of both were incorporated in *Les Chroniques et excellents Faits des Ducs, Princes, Barons et Seigneurs de la noble Duché de Normandie*," Paris, s.a.

The story of Robert has either been made up from the legends of St. Alexis and that of St. Roque, or these latter have borrowed from the legend of Robert. St. Roque is always represented with the dog and the wound in his thigh. He is ever in pilgrim garb; and in the original story Robert goes in pilgrimage to Rome, and the incidents of his penance take place at Rome. As, however, he seems to have been a contemporary with Charles the Great, and is associated with his wars against the Arabs, I have transferred the scene to Paris.

Robert I., sixth Duke of Normandy, was also surnamed by some "The Devil," by other "The Magnificent"; but he was the second son of Richard the Good, and was father of William the Conqueror. It is not possible to fit the story to this duke; but it is by no means surprising that as his name was Robert, and he showed himself somewhat rough in dealing with his enemies, the nickname so well known through tradition should have also attached to him.

The marvellous horse and armour are an Oriental importation, and this incident can hardly be earlier than the crusades. It is also introduced into other folk-tales.

The old English prose romance was reprinted by M. Thoms in 1828, and again in 1858. It reposes on the metrical romance of

"Robert le Diable" of the thirteenth century, which was first printed by Trébutien in 1837, from a MS. in the Bibliotheque Royale at Paris. There is also a metrical English romance on the same subject, probably of the end of the thirteenth or beginning of the fourteenth century, which was printed in London in 1798. The story must have been extant before the battle of Hastings, as Henry of Huntingdon informs us that William the Conqueror referred to it in his address to the soldiers: "He overcame the devil himself, with whom he wrestled, and cast down and bound him, leaving him a shameful spectacle to angels.'

XVII

THE CROWN OF WHITE ROSES

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THE CROWN OF WHITE ROSES

THERE lived once on a time a mason; he was young, an excellent workman, and very diligent. Consequently he was much sought after.

Now he saw a very modest, beautiful girl, and he went to her mother's house to ask to have her as his wife.

The mother answered and said, "My daughter is the best girl in the world; but she is very poor. Indeed, she has got as her dower nothing whatever but a crown of white roses. She has a fairy godmother, and this fairy at her birth gave her this rather than riches. The property of the crown of white roses is this: Whenever she is spoken roughly to and frightened, the roses curl up; and when she is approached with words of treachery, they close altogether; should anyone venture to kiss her except her father and mother, and her husband when she has one, all the leaves of the roses will fall off. Look here!" said the old woman, and she pointed to a wreath of white roses that hung against the wall.

The mason looked and saw a beautiful garland, and all the white rose-leaves were quivering and curling.

"That is because my daughter is frightened," said the widow; "she saw you coming here, and she knows you have come after her."

"But I am not speaking roughly," said the man.

"No; but you are asking for her to be your wife, and that has frightened her. Now I will go and call her."

Then the young girl was summoned, and all the rose-leaves trembled and curled as she came in, and listened to the mason asking her to be his wife.

She looked up at the crown, but as the flowers remained open, and did not shut, she knew he was an honest man, and meant nothing but good.

So she agreed to be his wife.

Then he asked her to let him kiss her.

But she drew back in a great fright, and said, "No, I dare not, till you are my husband, or all the leaves of the roses will fall off, and the virtue of the garland will be at an end."

To make a long story short, the marriage took place, and the mason got a very sweet and good wife, who cared only for her house and her husband, to keep the first tidy and the other happy.

Now the house occupied by the mason was a bit of an old castle that had been abandoned, and would have fallen into total ruin if he had not spent much time, when not otherwise engaged, in mending the roof, patching up the walls, and making it habitable. Adjoining the entrance hall was a tower, and under this tower was a dungeon. In the floor was a loose board on a hinge, so contrived that whoever stepped on the board tumbled through into the dungeon beneath, from which it was impossible for anyone to extricate himself without assistance from above.

The mason told his wife to be very careful not to go into the tower because of this trap-door.

They lived very happily for some time together, and then the mason was asked to go and build a grand dining-hall for a nobleman at a distance; and as the pay offered was good, he consented to go.

Before he departed, he said to his dear wife, "I shall take the wreath of roses with me, and I shall look at it every day, and if I see the leaves tremble and curl, I shall know you are frightened, and if I see the roses close, I shall know that someone is approaching you with words of treachery; and if there seems to be real danger, then I will come back to you at once. If you are in real alarm, send any troublesome person into the tower-room, and tumble him into the dungeon, and I will attend to the matter on my return, or you can send for me, if you wish it."

Having said this, the mason went away, and carried the garland of roses with him. He reached the nobleman's castle, and was set his task, and worked at it diligently and skilfully. The nobleman came every day to see how his hall was getting on, and he sometimes stood beside the mason in his workshop when he was engaged on his plans, or in doing a bit of stone-carving.

One day he noticed the wreath of white roses hanging against the wall, near the table at which the man worked out his plans. Then he asked the mason about it, and heard the wonderful story of the virtues of the garland.

Well, this nobleman was an inquisitive man, and he thought and thought about the wreath of roses, and had no rest; but made up his mind to go and see the mason's wife, and find if he could snatch a kiss, and then come quickly back and discover whether by this means he could make the roses cast all their leaves.

So he taunted the mason, and said he did not believe what he said, and that this was all a story made up to try him, whether he were a fool or not.

The mason persisted in what he asserted, and the nobleman continued incredulous. At last he said to the mason, "Will you let me go and try if I can get a kiss?"

"You may go if you like," said the mason; "but I know very well that you will get none, and if you get badly off by the expedition, blame yourself and not me."

"Very well," said the nobleman; "I will risk it, and take the consequences, which cannot be bad. I can but be refused."

So away he went.

Now he rested not till he reached the door of the house where lived the mason when at home. He knocked, and was admitted. The young wife was frightened when she saw him, for she thought that something must have happened to her husband.

The nobleman said, " I have come to ask you to give me a kiss. Your husband has allowed me to come and try. I will give you twenty pounds if you will, as I am very curious to test the virtue of the wreath of roses. And now I have seen you, I shall be ever your debtor if you will allow me one kiss of your cherry lips."

Then the young wife said, " My lord, how can you ask such a thing, when you are splashed with mud all over your face? Go into the tower-room and wash your face, and then we will talk further about this said kiss."

So the nobleman thought that as he rode along, and passed market people on the road, mud had been splashed from their horses' hoofs over his face, and he hastily opened the door into the tower-room, walked forward, trod on the loose plank, and went head over heels down into the dungeon.

Now the mason had kept his eyes fixed on the wreath, and he had seen the fluttering of the rose-leaves, and the flowers closing. He was in alarm, and threw aside his tools, so as to start, but he looked again at the wreath, and all the roses were open again. So he knew that everything was well with his dear wife at home.

The nobleman, when he came to himself in the dungeon, found it all dark, and though he groped about, he could discover no possible way out; so he began to shout. The mason's wife paid no attention to him for a long time. At last she went into the tower-room, raised the trap-door, and asked what the captive wanted.

He begged and implored to be let out, but she would not hearken to his entreaties. She said that she intended to keep him there till her husband's return.

When the nobleman found it was no good his asking to be let out, then he begged that some food might be let down to him. The mason's wife answered that in her house there were no idlers, whoever ate had earned his victuals, and that if the nobleman desired food, he must spin till he had gained enough to pay for his meal.

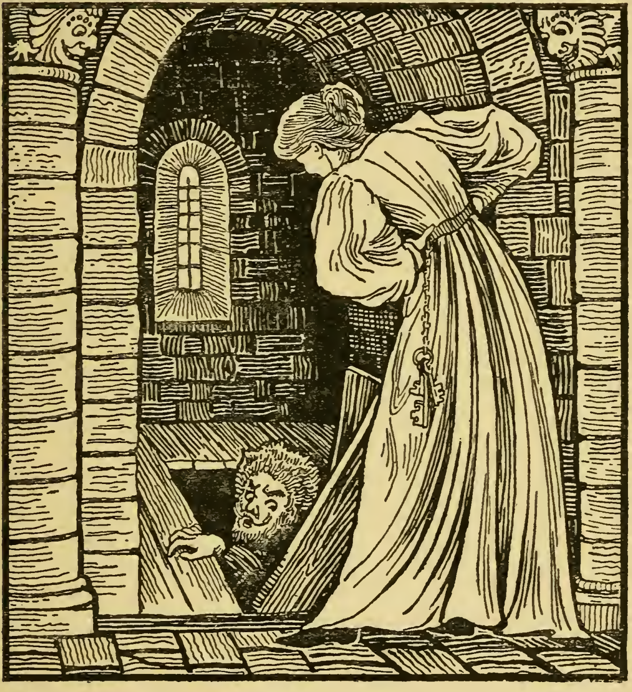
"Spin!" exclaimed the captive; "that is woman's work. I never span in my life."

"Nevertheless, you must spin or starve," answered the mason's wife.

Well, he remained tossing and stamping about in the dark dungeon some hours. At last he got so ravenously hungry, that he shouted out that he was ready to do the work set him. So the woman threw down a bundle of flax and a distaff for him to work upon, and hung a little lamp in the dungeon, by the light of which he might see to work.

The nobleman now set to work spinning, and though he was clumsy at first with his fingers, yet in time he had spun a whole spindleful of fine thread. When this was done, he was quite sick and faint with hunger. He called, and the woman came; she let down a little basket, and he put his hank of thread in; and, as she was satisfied, she passed down to him some bread and water, upon which he fed ravenously.

Now it must be told how that people wondered much at the disappearance of the nobleman. Some thought he had gone to court because summoned by the king; some that he had gone fighting in France; some that he had been waylaid by robbers and murdered.



It happened that one day the steward of the nobleman came into the mason's workshop, and he also asked the meaning of the ever-blooming crown of roses. Then the mason told him, as he had told the nobleman.

Now the steward was a cunning man, and he thought within himself that he would go and try if he could get a kiss; and if he did, and the leaves fell off, then this crown would be a great curiosity, and he would buy it, and go round the country in a van showing it, and make a great deal of money by it. He did not know that if once the leaves fell off, they would never come out again, and he thought that the wreath would answer just as well for his own wife as for that of the mason.

So he also went a journey to the house where dwelt the mason's wife. He knocked at the door, and was admitted, and he began to flatter and praise the woman, and say all the honeyed things he could think of, and then, when he supposed that he had turned her head with his flattery, he popped out a petition that he might have a kiss.

"Oh," said she, "how can you ask such a thing, when you have been stung by a bee on your lip, and it is swollen?"

"I did not know I had been stung," said he.

"Go into the tower-room. You will find a mirror there. Look into it, and see for yourself."

So he opened the door, walked in, and tumbled through the trap-door head over heels into the dungeon.

When he came to himself, he was greatly astonished to see there his master hard at work, spinning thread, The steward asked whether it was not possible to get out, but his master said that there was no chance at all.

After some time, the steward began to clamour for food. The mason's wife answered him through the trap-door, that she would give him none unless he earned it by swingling, that is to say, beating flax.

The steward said, "Then have I wonder;
Rather would I die of hunger,
  Without housel and shrift."
The lord said, "So did I feel;
But you'll work if you hunger well,
  And work what work is thee brought."
The lord sat and did his work;
The steward sulked, it drew dark,
  Great sorrow was in his thought.

The lord now shouted, and the woman came to the trap-door, and he said, "Dame, I have spun all the line, now let me have something to eat."

He passed up what he had spun, and some dinner was let down to him. He ate up every scrap.

The lord ate and drank fast,
The steward hungered at the last,
  And said, "My lord, give me some."
The lord said, "Not a morsel, not a sop,
Shalt thou have go down thy throat,
  Nay—not so much as a crumb;
Unless thou help to swingle line (flax),
Much hunger will be thine,
  So work—and cease thy moan."

The steward was obliged to give in, he was famished. He entreated for work, and the woman threw in a great bundle of flax for him to beat with a rod, till he had made the fibre tender, and had beat away all the worthless matter. So the steward worked hard, battering with a stick on the hemp to disengage the fibre, and becoming hot and exhausted with his work. But as he could get no food till he had earned it, he did not dare to give over.

It must now be told that the mason one day saw his wreath of roses all of a quiver, and then the flowers close up more like buds than full roses. He was much alarmed, and he pulled on his coat and put aside his tools to hasten away to his wife's assistance, when all at once the roses spread out again as before.

There was great wonder when it was found that the steward had disappeared as well as the nobleman. And now the parish constable took the matter up, and began to inquire, and soon learned that the last that had been seen of the nobleman was on a market day, riding in the direction of the mason's house.

On further inquiry, he learned that the last seen of the steward was by a shepherd who had observed him riding a mule into the yard of the mason's house.

So he started on a donkey, and jogged along till he arrived at the old castle which had been turned into a house by the mason. And he tumbled off his ass, and kicked and hammered with his fists at the door till it was opened, and then he burst in, panting and blowing, and threw himself into a chair.

When he had got his breath, he began to bluster and shout, "Where are the nobleman and the steward? They have been seen coming this way. I am sure you have some knowledge as to where they are. I will see. I will have you hanged if you have made away with them."

"If you think that I have done them harm, go and look all about my house," said the wife. "For my part, I think I have done them good."

"I'll find out. I am a man of the law. I am parish constable. I'll ransack your house from attic to cellar."

Then he dashed through the door into the tower-room, trod on the loose plank, and away he went head over heels down into the dungeon.

When he came to his senses, he looked round and saw to his astonishment the nobleman spinning, and the steward swingling.

The steward and also the knight
Said, "Constable, man of might,
  Come and sit us by."
The constable began to stare,
For he was, he knew not where,
  But well he knew the knight,
And the steward working the flax.
He said, "Sirs, may I ax
  What you do here, this night?"
The steward answered, "Well may you fare,
You came to see where we two were,
  Now help this linen to dight."

The constable stormed and stamped about, and vowed he was not accustomed to do woman's work, and do it he would not.

The steward answered that they were as good men as he, but they could not help themselves, work they must, or starve.

The constable declared he would rather starve than do that sort of work, to which the steward retorted that he would whistle another tune presently.

After a while the woman let down the basket, and the nobleman and steward sent up their tale of work, which was approved, and their food let down to them in return. Whereupon they set to eat ravenously, and ate up all, nor let the constable have a crumb of bread nor a drop of water.

After some hours he became furiously hungry, and began to bellow and knock, and when the woman opened the trap-door, he called to her to let him have his task, for he could not withstand the pangs of hunger much longer. So she threw him down flax which he was to comb, or heckle, as it was called.

Thus they sat and wrought fast
Till the week's days were past;
  Then the wright, home came he.
And as he came to his house side,
He heard a noise that was not ryde (small),
  Of persons two or three.
One of them combed line (flax),
Another swyngled good and fine,
  Before the swyngling tree.
The third did reel and spin,
Meat and drink therewith to win,
  Great need thereof had he.
Thus the wright stood hearkening;
His wife aware of his coming,
  All to meet him went she.
"Dame," he said, "what is this din?
I hear a great noise within.
  Tell me, sweet, with speed."
"Sir," she said, "good workmen three
Are come to help both you and me."

Then she took her husband by one hand; in the other he carried the wreath of roses, all in full blow, and she led him into the house, and there the noise was greater. Next she conducted him into the tower-room, and here it was louder still.

Then she raised the trap-door, and the mason looked down, and by the light of the lamp saw the constable with an iron comb heckling or combing out the flax that the steward with much labour had swingled, or beaten to fibre, and the nobleman sitting cross-legged in the straw, spinning, and whistling as he span.

When the mason saw this, he dropped the trap-door in the floor, and went into a fit of laughter, till the tears ran down his cheeks.

It was some time before he recovered himself sufficiently to look down again. Then he said—

"Good sirs! what do you here?"
They answered, "Earning our meat dear
  With great travail and pain.
We pray you help us to get out,
And we will promise without doubt
  Never to come here again."

Well, after a while he gave way, let down a strong cord, and pulled the men up one after the other.

Then the lord opened his purse and poured out all the money in it into the hand of the mason, and said, "I shall never forget the lesson taught me by your wife. If a man will not work, neither shall he eat."

Then the steward did the same; he said, "I gladly give you my money, for you are a lucky man to have so wise and good a wife. I have learned one thing. A man may be over grasping, and so overreach himself."

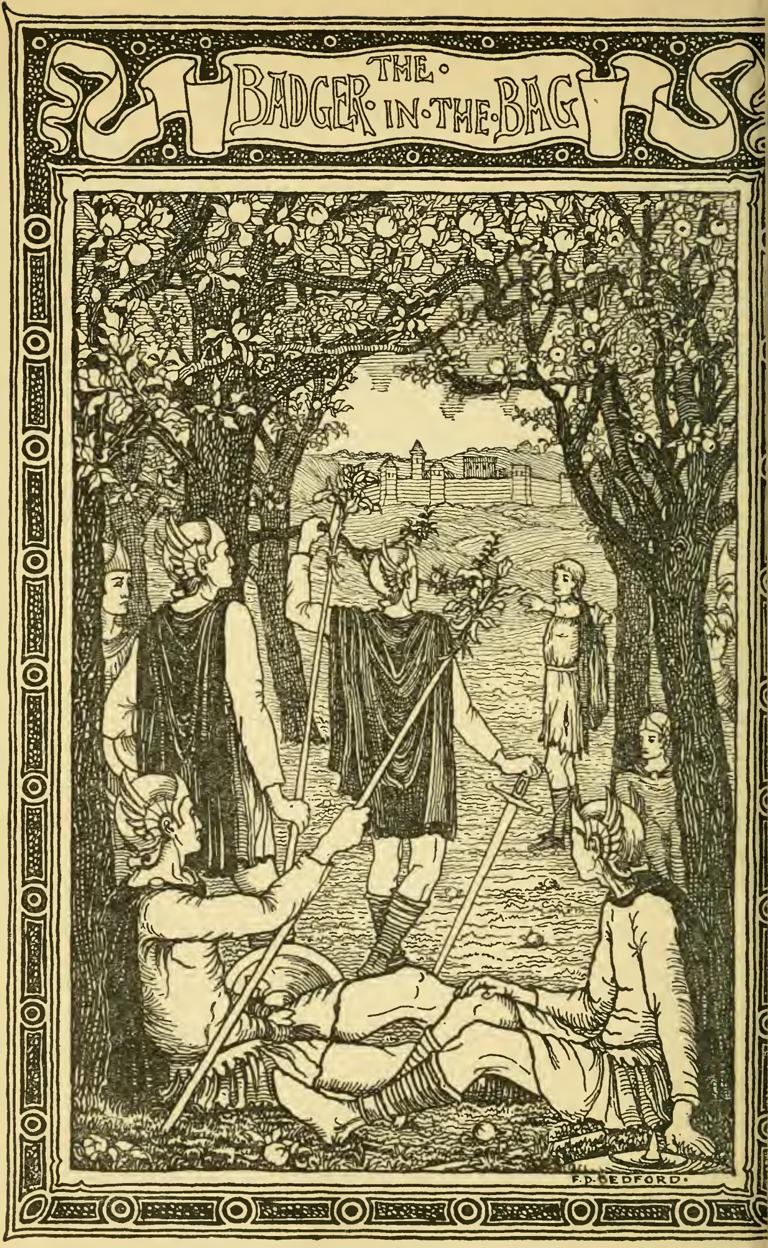
And then the constable opened his purse, and gave all it contained to the mason, and said, "Take this, and hold your tongue about what has happened. If this gets abroad, all my consequence will be gone."

Thus the wright's garland was fair of hue,
And his wife was both clever and true,
  Whereat he was full blithe.
And I take witness great and small,
Such be most women, if not all,
  That now be alive.

NOTE.—The lay here rewritten exists in MS. in the Lambeth Library, and was printed for the Early English Text Society by Mr. Furnivall, 1865. The date of the poem is about 1460, for at the conclusion is an allusion, in connection with the "white roses," to the accession of Edward IV., and the triumph of the White Rose of the House of York over the Red Rose of the House of Lancaster. As an example of the spelling I give the last lines.

Here endyth the wryghtes processe trewe
Wyth hys garland feyre of hewe
  That neuer dyd fade the coloure.
It was made by the avyse
Of hys wywes moder wytty and wyse
  Of flourys most of honoure.
Of roses whyte that wylle nott fade,
Whych floure alle Ynglond doth glade
  Wyth trew loues medelyd in syght;
Unto the whych floure I wys
The loue of God and of the comenys
  Subdued bene of ryght.

The only alterations made in the story are such as seem necessary for adaptation to a child's tale.


THE BADGER IN THE BAG
F.D. BEDFORD

XVIII

THE BADGER IN THE BAG

POWELL was the name of a prince in South Wales, and he had his palace at Narberth.

On the hill above his palace stood a grey old cairn of piled-up stones and of unknown antiquity.

One day Powell was on the hill, when he said he would stand upon the cairn. Then some of his wise men said to him, "Sire, it is peculiar to that mound, that whoever sits on it shall come into some strange adventure."

Then Powell went up the cairn, and seated himself on the top.

Thereupon, all at once, he saw a beautiful lady on a snow-white horse, in a garment of gold tissue, come riding by. The horse seemed to move at an even pace, and to go slowly ambling.

Powell said to his men, "Who can that lady be?"

None could answer him.

Then he said, "Go one of you and salute her, and ask her name."

And one of them arose, and came into the road to meet her, but she ambled past, and he followed as fast as he could, being on foot; but in no way could he catch her up. Then, when he saw his efforts were in vain, he returned to Powell and said, "Sire, it is not possible for anyone to overtake her, he being on foot."

"Then," said the prince, "go to the palace, and take the fleetest horse thou seest, and pursue her."

The man took a horse, and went forward. And he came to an open, level plain, and put spurs to his horse; and the more he urged his horse, the farther she seemed to be from him. Yet she held the same pace as at first. And his horse began to fail; and when his horse failed him, he returned to the place where Powell was, and said, "Sire, it is of no avail for anyone to go after that lady. I know of no horse swifter than this, and it availed me nothing to pursue her."

"Of a truth," said the prince, "some illusion is here."

Next day he went forth again to the cairn on the hill, and before he ascended it, he stationed a young man near, ready mounted on his fleetest horse, and bade him ride after the lady the moment he gave the signal, should she again appear.

Now no sooner was Powell seated on the cairn than once more the lady appeared, on the same white horse and in the same apparel, coming along the same road.

Then Powell signed, and the young man put spurs into his horse; but the lady trotted by, and though his horse strained in pursuit, yet was it not possible for him to come up with the lady. And the more he urged his horse, the farther she was from him. Yet she rode not faster than before. When he saw that it availed not to follow her, he returned to the place where Powell was.

Next day Powell again went to the mound, but he had his own horse saddled and brought near, and a page held it. Now it fell out as before. No sooner had the prince seated himself, than he beheld the lady coming along the same road, in the same manner, and at the same pace.

Thereat Powell jumped on his horse. And by the time he was seated, she had passed the mound. Then he pursued, but he gained nothing on her.

Therefore he called, "Fair maiden! for the sake of him thou lovest best, tarry for me."

She answered, "I will tarry," and she drew rein. She threw back the veil that half covered her face; and Powell thought that the beauty of all the maidens he ever had seen was as nothing to hers.

"Lady," said he, "whence camest thou, and whither dost thou go?"

"I journey on my own errand," she answered.

"And what is that?" he further inquired.

"I will answer truly," she said. "My chief desire was to find thee."

"That is great pleasure for me to hear," he said. "But tell me who thou art."

She answered, "I am Rhyannon, a princess, and my father seeks to marry me to one whom I hate and abhor; and therefore, as I can obtain no help elsewhere, I have come this way, having heard of thy greatness and virtue, in the hopes that thou wouldst succour me."

"That will I gladly," said Powell.

"Then," said she, "ride on with all thy knights to my father's court, and ask him to give me to thee as wife in the place of Wall, son of Clud."

He agreed to do so.

Then he returned to his men, and they busked them in all their most splendid apparel, and rode with him to the palace of the king, the father of Rhyannon. Powell was well received, and he prepared for him a great feast,—for him and all his knights, and he seated Powell on one side. Rhyannon, the Fair May,[1] was on the other side of Powell. And on the other side of the king, the father of the fair lady, sat Teirnon, Prince of Gwent, which is now called the Forest of Dean.

Much red wine was drunk, and Powell's heart was lifted up, and he resolved, as soon as the feast was finished, to ask the hand of Rhyannon, the Fair May.

But whilst he was thinking thereon, there entered the hall a tall, red-haired youth with a freckled face, and he was clothed in a garment of orange satin. He came before Powell, and saluted him.

Powell knew not who he was, but he received his salutation well, and said, "Nay, but here on my left hand is the king—to him thou must make thy request. I am but his visitor."

Then said the young man, "It is even to thee I came."

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[1] May is an old English word for maiden.

"Say then what thou hast to say," answered Powell.

"It is this," said the red-haired youth. "Wilt thou promise on thy word of honour as a prince to do for me as I say?"

"I pass thee my princely word I will do so," said Powell.

"Then," said the strange youth, "I ask thee to bid the king of this court give me his daughter Rhyannon to wife, at once, and that this feast be my wedding banquet and hers."

Then Powell was silent, because of the promise he had made.

And Rhyannon at his side exclaimed, "Never did man make a more foolish use of his word than thou. Know that this red-haired man is Wall, the son of Clud, whom I bade thee come and deliver me from, and now hast thou undertaken to give me unto him."

Powell was sore abashed and troubled at heart.

"Now," said she; "it must be as thou hast said. Solicit the king, my father, to give me to Wall as wife, this day twelvemonth."

"I cannot do this!" exclaimed Powell.

"Nay, but it must be so. Thou canst not go against thy princely word."

Then Powell was constrained to do even as he had promised. And when he had spoken, then Rhyannon said, "Only this have I against it. The banquet has been prepared for Powell and his knights, and it ill befits that my wedding feast should be on the broken victuals that remain. It would be made a laughing matter throughout Wales, that Wall, son of Clud, and Rhyannon, the Fair May, made their wedding banquet off the half-gnawed bones and the cast-away crusts, and drained the dregs of the cups, after Powell and his men had eaten and drunken."

Then Wall flushed red and said, "To this I agree. Let there be a new feast."

"Be it so," said Rhyannon; "and let our wedding feast be a twelvemonth from to-day."

Then Wall, son of Clud, departed.

After that Powell was sore distressed, and he could neither eat nor drink any more.

Then Rhyannon, the Fair May, said to him, "Follow my counsel and do this. This day twelvemonth come to my wedding repast, and come in old rags. I will give thee a little bag, and bring this bag in thy hand. But bring also with thee a hundred knights, and conceal them among the apple-trees of this orchard that is before the palace. And when Wall is in the midst of his merriment, come thou in, clad in ragged garments, and holding the bag in thy hand, and ask nothing but a bagful of food, and I will cause that if all the meat and liquor that are in my father's realm were put into it, it would be no fuller than before. For I have a fairy godmother, and she will do this for me if I tell her my trouble, and ask her assistance. Then do thou complain that this bag will never be full until a man of noble birth and great wealth arise and press the food in the bag with both his feet, saying, 'Enough has been put in.' I will cause Wall to go and tread down the food in the bag, and when he does this, turn thou the bag, so that he shall be up over his head in it, and then slip a knot upon the thongs of the bag. Then blow a blast of thy bugle-horn, and let this be a signal for all thy knights to rise up out of the orchard and come in."

So Powell rode back to his possessions in the south of Wales; and he carried with him the bag that Rhyannon, the Fair May, had given him, and tarried till the time appointed.

Then Powell waited only till he knew that Wall had departed for his wedding, and then he bade his knights be ready, and they rode till they came to the orchard, and then they concealed themselves, they and their horses. But as for Powell, he clad himself in coarse and ragged garments, and wore large clumsy old shoes upon his feet, and threw the old bag over his shoulder.

When he heard that there was hard drinking and great merriment in the hall, he entered and went in, and bowed himself to and saluted the bridegroom, Wall, son of Clud.

Wall said, "Well, beggar man, what lackest thou?"

"Meat, sir, meat," answered Powell, "for my bag."

"Thou shalt have as much as will fill it," said Wall.

"Is that thy solemn word and oath?" asked Powell.

"Ay, I give thee my word thereto," answered Wall.

Then Powell began to clear off everything from the board, and it seemed as though the bag would never be full. Then Wall called for all the stores in the palace, but they sufficed not.

Rhyannon said to him, "Sir, that bag will never be filled, even though all the food in all my father's realm were cast into it, unless some man of noble birth step in and stamp on its contents with his feet. Do thou enter and tread it together, that thou be not brought to shame through being unable to perform thy promise to a ragged beggar man."

Then Wall sprang from his seat and said to the beggar, "Hold open the mouth of the sack."

Powell did so, and Wall stepped in.

No sooner was he in the sack than Powell drew it up over his head, and tied a knot fast in the thongs, and then blew a blast on his bugle-horn, and his knights came leaping in; and they seized the men who had come with Wall, and bound them, and cast them into prison. Powell threw off his old rags and his rough shoes, and he cast down the sack with Wall in it for his knights to strike at, and every knight, as he came in, asked, "What is there in that bag?"

Then Powell answered, "A badger." And each knight struck the bag either with his foot or with a staff. And some said, "What game is this you are playing?" And they answered, "This is the merry game of the Badger in the Bag."

Wall, who was within, cried out at every stroke, and at last he pleaded, "Sire, release me. I would not be slain, kicked to death in a sack."

"Well, then," said Powell, "what dost thou bid for thy life?"

Then said Rhyannon, "Hearken, and take my counsel. Give me up to Powell, and think no more to have me as thy wife, then will he let the badger out of the bag."

"I will do this gladly," said Wall.

"And I will accept this," answered Powell.

Thereupon Powell loosed the strings and let Wall crawl out. But Rhyannon would have held his hand, and she said, "Always art thou too hasty. Thou hast let him escape without making him swear not to take vengeance for what has been done to him. Now I greatly fear that we shall suffer for this."

It was now too late to alter matters, for Wall was out of the sack, and, crawling and muttering threats, he had left the room.

Then the feast was continued with great merriment, and Rhyannon was made the wife of Powell instead of the wife of Wall, and when the feast was ended, she and Powell, attended by his hundred knights, rode to his kingdom in South Wales, and to his palace at Narberth, where a great banquet was made ready for them. There came to that great numbers of the chief men, and most of the noble ladies of the land; and there was not one to whom Rhyannon did not give some rich present either a bracelet, or a ring, or a precious stone And Powell ruled the land prosperously both that year and the next, and then Rhyannon became the mother of a beautiful babe.

Now she at once sent to her fairy godmother who bade her be very watchful, for Wall, son of Clud was full of malice, and he would seek to carry away the babe, in revenge for his treatment in the bag.

Accordingly, women were appointed to watch the babe both night and day.

It must be related that Wall, son of Clud, had returned home full of rage and vows of vengeance for the treatment he had received, both the losing of his wife and the badger baiting. There lived an old witch in the Black Mountains, and on his return home he went forth and consulted her. She was thought to be the most powerful witch in all Britain. She could make rocks dance, and trees stand with their roots in the air, and the waves of the sea to foam blood.

Then she said to him, " In time there will be a son born to Powell and Rhyannon. Do thou take that occasion to steal the child away."

" How is that to be done ? " asked Wall.

" There will be seven nurses appointed to watch the cradle. Do thou disguise thyself as a woman and offer thyself to be nurse. Then take this snuff-box, and when in the room, offer snuff to all those there, and say that it will clear the brain, and it will send all to sleep. Then haste away with the babe, and bring it to me."

" And how shall I pay thee for this advice ? " asked Wall.

" In this way," answered the witch. " I am especially partial to horse-flesh. Every month you must bring me a young foal, or a horse, for my eating."

" I will do that," said Wall.

Now when the little prince was born to Powell, there were seven nurses appointed, and when Wall, dressed in female garments, applied, he was told that the number was made up. Nevertheless, he was nothing daunted, but tarried near the palace. After three days and nights of watching, the nurses became tired, and they wished that they could get away for a walk in the fields, or for sleep, to lie down for a little while; and as nothing had happened to alarm them, they thought that the precautions taken were somewhat unnecessary. Then Wall offered to relieve the nurses one after another during the night, and they gladly accepted the offer. So he took the place of the first nurse. Then Rhyannon looked hard at him, and said, "Who is this red-haired tall woman who has come?"

They said that she was a nurse come to relieve the one who had gone home, as she was summoned to see her husband, who was ill.

All that night Rhyannon watched, and never took her eyes off the strange nurse.

The second night, another nurse begged to be excused, and Wall took her place. Rhyannon was uneasy. She thought that she had seen the freckled face somewhere, and could not recall to whom it had belonged. All night she kept her eyes open, watching the cradle and the strange nurse.

Then Wall was afraid of being known, so he dyed his face with walnut-juice, and darkened his hair, and changed his dress to another colour, and offered himself as substitute, and was again accepted, for now the third nurse wished to be relieved.

That night the child cried, and Wall endeavoured to still it. Rhyannon listened to her voice, and thought she knew its tones, but could recall no woman who spoke like this strange dark woman. She was anxious, and did not sleep a wink all night.

Then Wall swallowed chalk to make his voice soft, and offered himself for the fourth night, and was again taken, for once more a nurse desired to be released.

That night Rhyannon remained awake again, for she had noticed the eyes of the strange woman, and there was in them a cunning and a treacherousness that alarmed her. So she watched throughout the night.

Then Wall put a green shade over his eyes, lest they should be seen, and disguised himself as an old woman, and offered to take the place of the fifth nurse, and was accepted.

But still Rhyannon could not sleep. She watched, and she wondered that one who was bowed double with age should have such smooth cheeks and hands, and no wrinkles anywhere.

Then Wall took a bit of charcoal and drew it over his cheeks and hands and brow, and so seemed to be full of wrinkles and age; and he was accepted the sixth night. But this time, as he walked about with the babe to lull it to sleep, Rhyannon saw below the gown a pair of man's boots with gold spurs, and this alarmed her, and she could not sleep, but watched the whole night.

And on the seventh night, Wall had taken off his boots and put on slippers, and Rhyannon was heavy with sleep, and as there was now nought to alarm her, she slept. And as she slept, the seven nurses talked, and complained how great was the restraint put upon them, and how this watching wearied them.

Then Wall took out the snuff-box and offered each a pinch, "for," said he, "this will clear your brains." The nurses took a pinch each, and hardly had they snuffed before they were asleep.

Then Wall stole out of the room, cast aside his female disguise, mounted his horse, and, carrying the baby, rode away to the Black Mountains, and gave the little prince to the old hag.

Now the nurses awoke before dawn, and looked in the cradle, and found that the child was gone. Then they were greatly alarmed, and they said one to another, "We shall be burned or hanged because of the child."

Then said one of the nurses, "This is what I advise. There is a stag-hound bitch, and she has a litter of whelps. Let us kill some of the cubs, and rub the blood on the face and hands of Rhyannon, and lay the bones in the cradle, and let us declare that she has devoured her son, and she alone will not be able to gainsay us six."

And according to this counsel, so was it settled.

Towards morning Rhyannon awoke, and said, "Where is my baby boy?"

"Lady," said the nurses, "do not ask after your child, for you ate him in the night, and we tried in vain to deliver him from you. See your hands are dyed in his blood, and his bones are in the cradle."

Rhyannon cried out that she was falsely accused of this. But what was her word against six?

Then there was great commotion in the realm, and the nobles came together, and demanded that Powell should condemn his wife to be burned alive for the crime she had committed. But to this he would never consent. So a council was held, and it was ordered, by advice of the bishop, that she should do penance for seven years, and that if she spake the truth, God would reveal it, and relieve her of the penance. And the penance to which the nobles consented was this, that she should sit every day on a horse-block near the palace gate, and that every guest who came to the gate she should offer to carry within on her back.

And this was imposed on her. She sat daily at the gate, but never did any guest come who was so uncourteous as to insist that she should carry him within on her back.

Thus passed half the year.

Now all this while the witch of the Black Mountains had been feeding on the colts and horses of the stud of Wall, son of Clud. And she had acquired such a craving for horse-flesh, that nothing else would satisfy her. But by this time she had eaten up all the horses and mares and colts that Wall had, and he was not able to give her any more. And yet she was ravenous, and though he offered her bullocks and calves, she rejected them. She said that she would eat horse-flesh and nothing else, and she bade him go and see where there was a stud from which she could obtain what she wanted.

Then he said, "Teirnon, King of Gwent, has a notable stud, but he will never sell any of his horses, not for half a kingdom. They are all white, with red ears. But how to get them, I know not."

Now it fell out that Teirnon had a beautiful mare, that was quite unsurpassed in the kingdom. On the night of the first of May she foaled, and no one knew what became of the foal—it was spirited away.

One night Teirnon talked with his wife, and said to her, "That will be a sad thing if our mare foal every year and we lose all her colts. I will watch and see what becomes of her foals."

So, next time the mare foaled, Teirnon watched, and he saw an old woman's hand with claws to every finger come in through the window and lay hold of the colt. Then he drew his sword and hewed, and cut the hand off at the wrist.

There ensued great wailing without; so he ran out of the stable, and, sure enough, there was an old witch with one of her hands cut off. She begged and entreated him to give her back the hand he had struck off. Then he asked her what she would give him if he restored to her the hand, and she said that she would give him the most beautiful babe in the world.

To that he agreed, and he brought out her hand, and she put it to the stump, and it grew on as if it had never been cut off, only a red line remained to mark where the gash had been.

Then, at once, she went and brought him a child, and as fair a child he never had seen. It was wrapped around in a mantle of satin. Then he took the child to his wife, and, because they had no son, they adopted him as their own. And because his hair was as yellow as gold, they called him Euryn, which in the Welsh tongue signifies "The Golden."

They had the boy nursed in the court until he was a year old. And before he was a year old he could walk. He was larger than a boy of three years; and the boy was nursed the second year, and then he was as large as a child of six.

But it fell out that again was a colt taken away. For it was so that the witch of the Black Mountains had found the white foal with red ears that she had snatched away ten times better eating than any other she had tasted, and at last the craving came on her so strongly, that, notwithstanding the risk she ran, she could not restrain herself from carrying off another.

Then Teirnon was wroth, and said he would watch again.

And his wife said to him, "We do not know whose child this is that has been given to us. Yet is it quite clear that he is of princely birth, and the more I look on him, the more he resembles in my eyes the Prince Powell of South Wales. Now, the garments in which he was folded were of silk, richly embroidered. All this shows that he is of illustrious birth, and we do wrong to retain him, if by any fashion we can understand who he really is. If, then, you succeed in detecting the witch stealing your colt, then constrain her to say who the babe is."

To this Teirnon agreed, and he watched in the stable on the night of the first of May when his mare had foaled.

Then all at once through the window came a long lean arm, and every finger had on it a claw like that of a bird, and it laid hold of the colt. Thereupon the king smote, and cut off the hand, and the stump was withdrawn, and there ensued wailing without. So he ran outside and found the witch crying and hugging her wounded, mutilated arm. She begged him to restore to her the hand he had cut off. He agreed to do this if she would tell him whose son she had given him.

Then she said, " It is the child of Rhyannon and Powell that was carried off from the cradle."

Thereat Teirnon restored to her the cut-off hand, and she replaced it, and all that remained to show that it had been hewn away was a red line round her wrist.

But Teirnon went to his wife and told her all. Then they agreed to take the child to his true parents. And he could now ride. So they gave to him the milkwhite colt with red ears that had first been clutched hold of by the witch, when her hand was cut off, and redeemed by the present of the baby boy.

So Teirnon and his wife went to South Wales, and they took with them the lad, riding on his young horse, white, with red ears.

And when they arrived at the palace of Powell, there at the door sat Rhyannon on the horse-block. And she rose and offered to carry them within. But to this they would not consent.

Then was a feast spread to welcome them; and at the feast Teirnon rehearsed all the story of how he had got the child, and how he discovered who it was; and he spread his silken garments before Powell, that he might see and know that what he said was sooth.

Then was there great joy and rejoicing. The six false nurses who had slandered the queen were sentenced to lose their heads.

Rhyannon said, "My son shall be called Pryder, for he is a child of sorrow and distress of mind." [1]

NOTE.—The story of Pwyll, Prince of Dyved, in the Mabinogion. I have somewhat worked up the subtlety of Wall (Gwawll) and his taking away of the babe, as this is all very incomplete in the original, and the clawed hand lacks connection in the tale. The story was first translated for the *Cambrian Register*, and it also appeared in Jone's *Welsh Bards*. It then appeared in Lady Charlotte Guest's Edition of the Mabinogion. Dyved, of which Pwyll was king, is the region of the Dimetæ of the Romans, the modern Pembrokeshire. If there ever existed such a person, his date is as problematical as his existence.

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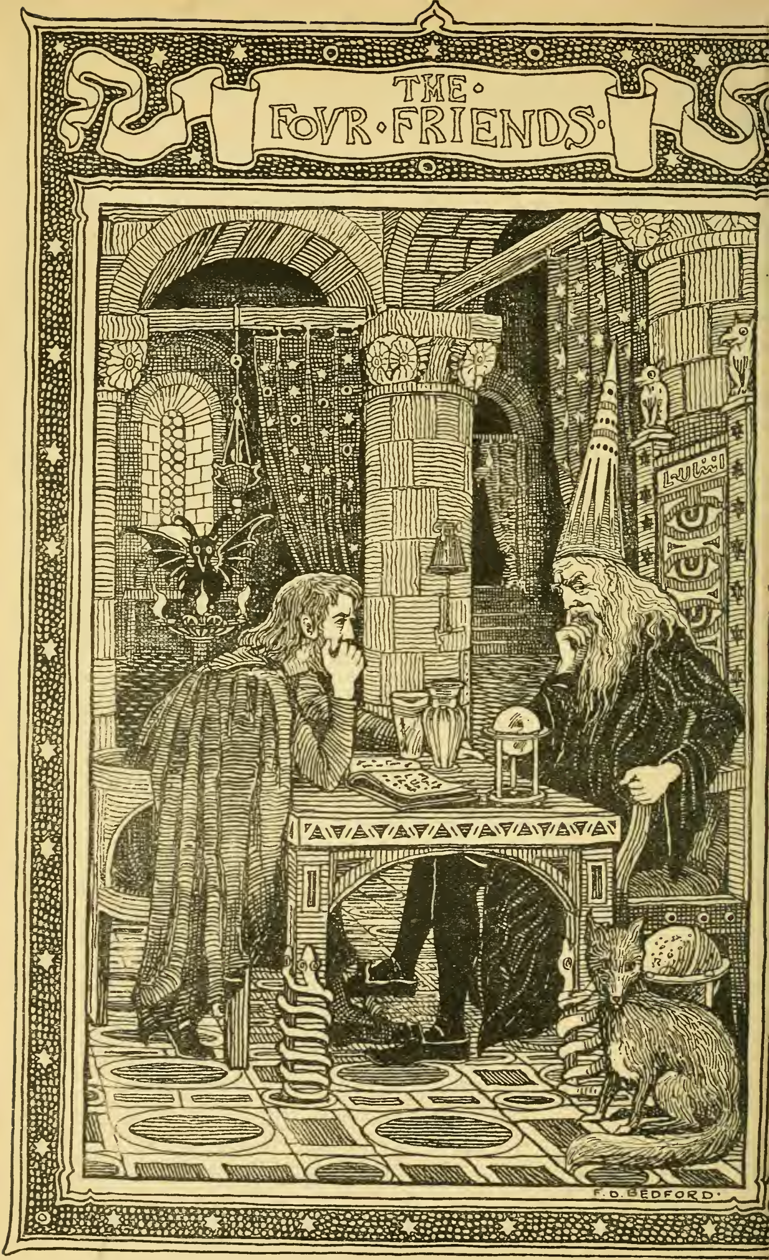
[1] Pryder in Welsh signifies anxiety.


THE FOVR FRIENDS
F. D. BEDFORD

XIX

THE FOUR FRIENDS

THE story has been told of the birth of Pryder. Now I am going to tell something further about him and his mother Rhyannon. This noble lady had lost her husband and Pryder his father, Powell, of whom the story has been related. Then by Pryder's advice she was married to a grave and honourable man called Manawhiddan, for whom Pryder entertained a warm affection and respect.

Pryder was married to a beautiful lady of the name of Kicva, and she became as fond of Rhyannon as Pryder her husband was of Manawhiddan.

It must not be supposed that Wall, son of Clud, had borne his discomfiture with an easy mind. He could neither forget nor forgive the game of Badger in the Bag, that had been played with him. So he went away into Scotland, to a great magician, and remained with him for twenty years, studying the black art, till at last he was accomplished in necromancy. Then he came back into Britain, and at once resolved on revenging himself for the past offences on Rhyannon and on Pryder, the son of Powell.

One day, when they were all at Narberth, there came on a terrific thunderstorm, and with it a mist so thick that no one could see a few feet before him.

After some hours the mist cleared away, and then there was light. Pryder and Manawhiddan looked around, and could see no one except their two wives. All their men and servants, had vanished and all the country was without people, and like a desert, uninhabited.

"Where are all those of the court?" cried Manawhiddan; "and where are all our men? Let us go and look for them."

They entered the hall, and there was no man. They went into the bedrooms, no one was there; they entered the kitchen, all the servants had vanished. There was nothing anywhere but desolation and solitude.

They tarried several days, wondering what this signified, and doubtful what to do. No living man or woman was to be seen, so Pryder and his step-father hunted, and in the evening they feasted; they fed on what they killed in hunting, and on the honey of wild swarms of bees.

Thus passed a whole year, and then a second, and then they became weary of solitude; so they departed, and travelled, and crossed the river Wye, and came into England, and they did not halt till they arrived in Hereford.

They knew no one there, and they were known to none, so, to maintain themselves and their wives, they worked at making saddles, and as they were skilful in the art of enamelling, they made rich housings for horses, and gilded them, and laid on blue enamel.

Their work was greatly admired, and at last no noble or gentleman would buy any saddles except such as had been made by the Welsh strangers.

Thus they drew away the trade from the English saddlers of Hereford. These were angry, and plotted to waylay and murder them. But they were warned of this by a servant, and they took counsel together, and resolved to depart.

So they went to Tewkesbury

"What craft shall we exercise here?" asked Pryder.

"We will make shields," answered Manawhiddan.

"Do you know anything of the craft?" asked Pryder.

"We will try," answered his stepfather. "I learned something of the art and of enamel painting from Lassar, who was driven out of Ireland by King Matholuc, and who came into Britain."

So they set to work and made shields, and they made beautiful shields, and enamelled them as they had done the saddles. They prospered exceedingly, so that no knight would buy a shield of any armourer, but only of these Welsh strangers. Thus they spoiled the trade for the native craftsmen. Thereat the armourers were jealous, and they resolved to fall on them and murder them.

Again, happily, they were forewarned, and they escaped out of that town, and went south, and came to Gloucester, and they entered in to dwell there.

"What craft shall we adopt?" asked Pryder.

"Let us make shoes," answered Manawhiddan.

"Do you know anything about shoemaking?" asked Pryder.

"A little—we can but try, and do our best," answered his stepfather. "I will teach you to stitch. We will not dress the leather ourselves, but will buy it ready dressed."

So they did this. They purchased the best leather they could obtain, and they associated themselves with a good goldsmith, and caused him to make clasps for the shoes, and to gild the clasps. And when they had observed and seen how this was done, then they set to work themselves and made shoes with buckles and clasps richly gilt and inlaid with enamel; and these became so popular in the country round, that at last none, neither ladies nor gentlemen, would buy any shoes of any cobblers, but only of the Welsh strangers. So the shoemakers resolved to surround them and stab them to death with their bradawls. But they got wind of what was intended, and though they had no fear of the cobblers, yet they deemed it best not to be in a brawl, so they left Gloucester and returned into Wales, and into that part whence they had come.

They returned to Narberth, and all was as they had left it. No men or women were there. Thistles and nettles grew in the palace court, and owls and bats haunted the towers.

They kindled a fire, and the two men hunted, and the two women cooked what was killed in hunting. And so time passed.

One morning Pryder and Manawhiddan rose up to hunt, and ranged their dogs, and went forth. Then some of the dogs ran ahead and began to yelp and leap about a bush, and when the two men came up, their dogs backed towards them with their hair bristling.

" Let us go to the bush, and see what is there," said Pryder.

Then they saw a wild boar, white as snow.

They set on their dogs, but he made a stand for a while, and then broke away and ran, and all the dogs after him. The two men pursued, till they came to a castle, newly built, in a place where hitherto nothing had stood, and into this rushed the boar, and the dogs after him.

Then Pryder said, " I will go in and see what has become of the dogs and the boar."

But Manawhiddan said, " This does not seem to me to be wise. Be ruled by me, and do not make this adventure. Whoever has cast a spell over the land, has caused this castle to be built."

" I cannot give up my dogs," said Pryder, and he went forward.

He entered the castle, but could neither see nor hear his dogs. Indeed, he saw no one man even.

In the central court of the castle was a fountain of crystal water and a marble breastwork round it, and on this rested a golden bowl.

Pryder was thirsty, and he dipped the bowl in the water, and at once his feet became rooted to the floor, and he could not withdraw his hand from the bowl. He was as one frozen, and speechless and motionless. And thus he stood.

Manawhiddan waited for him till sunset, and then returned to the palace, without any tidings of Pryder or of the dogs.

As he entered, his wife Rhyannon looked at him, and said, "What has happened to my son Pryder?"

Manawhiddan told her.

She exclaimed, "A bad companion are you not to look better after him!"

Then she went forth in the direction of the castle, and when she found it, she at once entered, and, seeing Pryder in the courtyard holding the golden bowl, she laid her hand on him, and at once was fast rooted to the slab of stone on which she stood, and her hand was as it were glued to her son, and she could neither speak nor stir.

Then night came on, and when morning dawned, no trace of the castle could be discovered, and Pryder and Rhyannon had vanished.

Manawhiddan and Kicva, the wife of Pryder, searched everywhere, and found nothing; then Kicva was sad and sorrowful, and she cared not whether she lived or died.

Manawhiddan saw how unhappy his stepdaughter was, and he bade her not be downcast, he would search and not give over till he had discovered those who had vanished so mysteriously.

Manawhiddan did not consider that much good would ensue if they remained where they were, so he and Kicva departed for English land, even to Bath, and Manawhiddan again took to making shoes, and he taught his stepdaughter to sew the leathers. He made and enamelled gilded clasps as he had done at Gloucester, and with the same result, that all the nobles and great ladies would buy no other shoes, but such as were made by him and Kicva. They remained where they were for a twelvemonth, and then the shoemakers became envious, and took counsel to murder them. Manawhiddan had news of this, and so he and Kicva left and returned into Wales.

Now when he went back, he carried a load of wheat on his back; and he carried it to Narberth, where he had been before. As he had lost all his dogs, he could no longer hunt; and he resolved to sow the wheat, and in the meanwhile, till it was grown and ripe, to sustain life by fishing, and by trapping birds and beasts, and by collecting roots and berries. He fenced in three fields, and in them he sowed the wheat he had brought out of England. The corn grew, and gave great promise of a harvest. At last it turned yellow, and Manawhiddan went to look at his cornfields, and said—"To-morrow I will reap the first of my crofts."

Next morning he rose early and went forth, with sickle in hand, and Kicva followed him, to bind up the sheaves as he cut.

But what was their astonishment and dismay to see nothing in the croft but bare straw—every ear had been cut off.

Then he went to the second field and said, "I will reap this to-morrow."

And on the morrow he came to reap it, and found that it had been dealt with in the same fashion. Nothing remained but straw—all the ears of corn had been taken away.

He was very wroth, and said, "Evil betide me if I do not watch the third field all night. Whoever carried off the corn from the two fields will endeavour to carry off the harvest from this one also."

So he went at nightfall to watch the croft.

At midnight he heard a strange trampling and rustling sound, and he looked from his hiding-place, and saw a vast horde of field-mice coming on, so vast that there seemed to be no end to them. And this swarm fell on his field, and a mouse ran up each straw, and nibbled off an ear. There was not a single stalk of wheat all through the field that had not a mouse on it.

Then the mice scampered off, carrying the ears of corn with them, and leaving bare straw.

In wrath Manawhiddan sprang from his hiding-place and pursued the mice. But they ran so fast that he could not catch them, with the exception of one which was dragging along a larger ear of wheat than the rest, and would not drop it. Yet it ran fast. But presently the corn-ear caught in a briar, and as the mouse stayed to disentangle it, Manawhiddan put down his hand and laid hold of it. It squealed and bit and struggled to escape, but all was of no use; he opened his glove, put the mouse within, and fastened the glove by a string, so that the little creature might not escape.

Then he returned to the ruinous palace in which he lived, and showed what he had caught, and told the story to Kicva. "See," said he, "here I have a thief that has been robbing me!"

"What will you do with the mouse?" she asked.

"I shall hang it as a thief. I wish I had captured the rest, and then I would hang them all."

Kicva pitied the little squeaking mouse, and she said, "Stepfather, let the mouse run away. It is but one, and it hardly seems dignified for a great noble like you to be setting up gallows on which to do execution on a poor little mouse."

"Woe betide me," answered Manawhiddan, "if I would not be executioner to them all if I could but catch them."

So then he went up the hill above Narberth, and he said that he would make an example of this mouse. He ascended the grey old cairn on the top of the hill, and, as may be remembered from the story of the Bagging of the Badger, no man might do this without seeing some wonderful sight and meeting with an adventure. Manawhiddan set up two forked sticks on the top of the old cairn, and put a piece of wood across between the forks. It was all not above eighteen inches high. That was to be the gallows. Then he took a piece of twine and prepared to make a noose of it. He had his glove looped round his left wrist, and in the glove was the frightened squeaking mouse, that seemed to be aware what was being done.

Whilst Manawhiddan was thus engaged, he saw a scholar coming towards him in poor and tattered garments. It was now seven years since Manawhiddan had seen any man in that place, except only his companions. He therefore suspected some enchantment, and resolved to be cautious.

The scholar saluted him, and, standing below the mound of stones, said, " My lord, good day."

" I wish you the same," answered Manawhiddan, without interrupting that on which he was engaged. " Whence come you ? "

" I come from England," answered the scholar. " Why do you ask ? "

" Because for the last seven years I have seen no man or woman in this place, save my wife and stepson and stepdaughter. And two of these are now gone."

The scholar said, " What are you at work on there, sir ? "

" I am about to hang a thief," answered Manawhiddan.

" And what manner of thief is that ? " asked the stranger.

" You shall see," said Manawhiddan. He opened the glove and took the little creature in his hand and held it fast.

The scholar looked hard at it, and it appeared to Manawhiddan that the mouse looked at the scholar.

Then said the latter, " Truly, sir, I see a mouse in your hand, and verily it seems to me an unbecoming thing of a king's son to be strangling mice."

" Unbecoming or not, I intend to do it," answered Manawhiddan. " I only wish I had a thousand of these thieves, and you would see the whole mound bristle with gallows."

"Rather than that I should see a man of your rank so demean himself," said the scholar, "I will give you a pound if you will set the mouse free."

"Keep the pound to get yourself a fresh coat," said the Welsh prince. "It surprises me to behold a man in rags like yourself so solicitous for the life of a mouse."

Then the scholar without more ado walked on his way.

Now Manawhiddan tried the crossbeam between the forks, to ascertain if it would hold the mouse, and he cut a little notch in it for the string. Then he saw a priest coming up the hill, riding on a horse covered with trappings.

"Good day to thee, lord," said the priest.

Manawhiddan returned his salute, and wondered yet more in himself that he should see another stranger on that morning, when all hitherto had been desolate and without inhabitants.

"Why, my lord," said the priest, "what work are you engaged upon?"

"I am hanging a thief that I caught robbing me."

"What manner of thief?" asked the priest.

"See, this is it," said Manawhiddan, and he showed the mouse, that began to struggle and squeal in his hand so soon as it saw the priest.

"Sir," exclaimed the newcomer, "I do not like to see a man of your rank exercising the hangman's office."

"Why not?" asked Manawhiddan. "If thieves steal my corn, they shall die a thief's doom."

"Rather than that," said the priest, "I will give you three pounds."

"Keep your three pounds towards a bell for your church, sir priest," said Manawhiddan. "I am by no means disposed to give up or to sell the mouse." Then the priest went his way.

Just as he was noosing the string round the neck of the mouse, he saw a bishop's retinue, with his sumpter-horses and his attendants, ride up the hill. Then Manawhiddan wondered yet more, and he kept a faster grip than ever on the mouse. He looked at the bishop and said, "Give me thy blessing, my lord bishop."

The bishop said, "My blessing be on thee. But what art thou engaged upon?"

Manawhiddan answered, "I am stringing up a thief whom I caught stealing my corn."

The bishop said, "I will gladly give you seven pounds if you will let the mouse run away."

"I will not set it free for twice that sum."

"Then, rather than that the mouse should be hung, I will even give twenty pounds," said the bishop.

"I will not set it free for that sum," answered Manawhiddan.

"If thou wilt let the mouse go free," said the bishop, "I will give thee all the horses that thou seest, and the seven loads of baggage on the seven horses."

"Not for that will I liberate the mouse."

"Then," said the bishop angrily, "name thy price." And he stamped his foot, and his headgear fell on one side, and Manawhiddan saw that he had red hair, and he suspected he had to do with Wall, the son of Clud. So he thought a moment and then said, "If I let the mouse run away, I must have Rhyannon and Pryder set free."

"It shall be so," said the bishop, or rather Wall who was disguised as one. "I will set them free."

"That is not sufficient," continued Manawhiddan; "I will not let loose the mouse for that alone. I must have the spell taken off the land."

"That also shall be done."

"That does not suffice," continued Manawhiddan, and he pinched the mouse so that it squealed. "I must know both who you are, and who is the mouse."

"That also you shall have," said the disguised bishop. "I am Wall, the son of Clud, and I have done all this evil to thee and thine, because I would be avenged for the Badgering in the Bag. And as to the mouse, she is my wife. I transformed all my household into mice, and they have destroyed all thy corn. If we could have driven thee and thy stepson out of the land, I would have taken it as my principality. Now, let the mouse, my wife, free."

"That I will not do yet," said Manawhiddan, and he nipped the ear of the mouse between his finger and thumb nail, and it squealed pitifully. "First you must swear to me not to put any more spells on the land."

"To that also I agree," said Wall. "Now release the mouse, my wife."

"Not yet," answered Manawhiddan. "Before I open my hand and let her run, you must swear not in any way to avenge what has been done upon me or Pryder or any of our race."

"All this shall be," said Wall. "And truly you have done well in exacting this."

"That I know," said Manawhiddan; "therefore did I keep hold of the mouse."

"Let her go now."

"Not till all be as covenanted between us. Where are Pryder and Rhyannon."

"Behold, here they come," said Wall.

Then, all at once, the two lost ones stood before them. The country appeared no longer desert, but cultivated, and filled with people.

Thereupon Manawhiddan opened his hand, and out ran—not a mouse, but a beautiful lady. Then she was mounted on a palfrey, and rode away; and she and Wall were seen no more.

NOTE.—The story of Manawyddan, son of Llyr, is in the Mabinogion. The only alteration made in it is to make the magician into Gwawl in place of Llwyd, son of Kilcoed, the friend of Gwawl, and this is done for the simplification of the story.

The story of the mice is doubtless a reminiscence of an old myth relative to souls, which in many mythologies are supposed to take the form of mice. Apollo Smintheus was the sun-god in his character of guardian of departed spirits; so also St. Gertrude is represented with mice, because in art she has inherited the attributes of Perchta, the Teutonic goddess of the dead.

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